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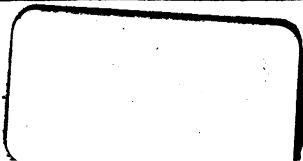
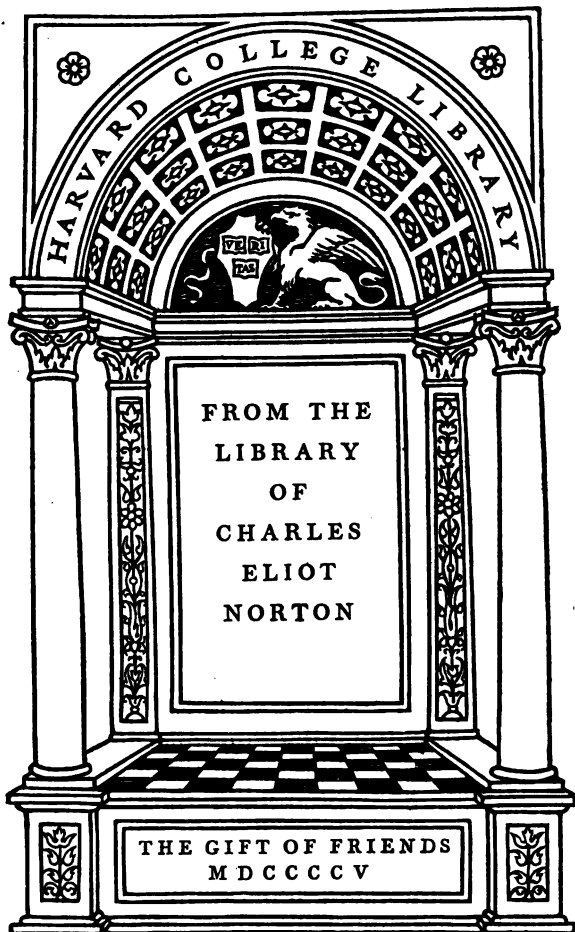
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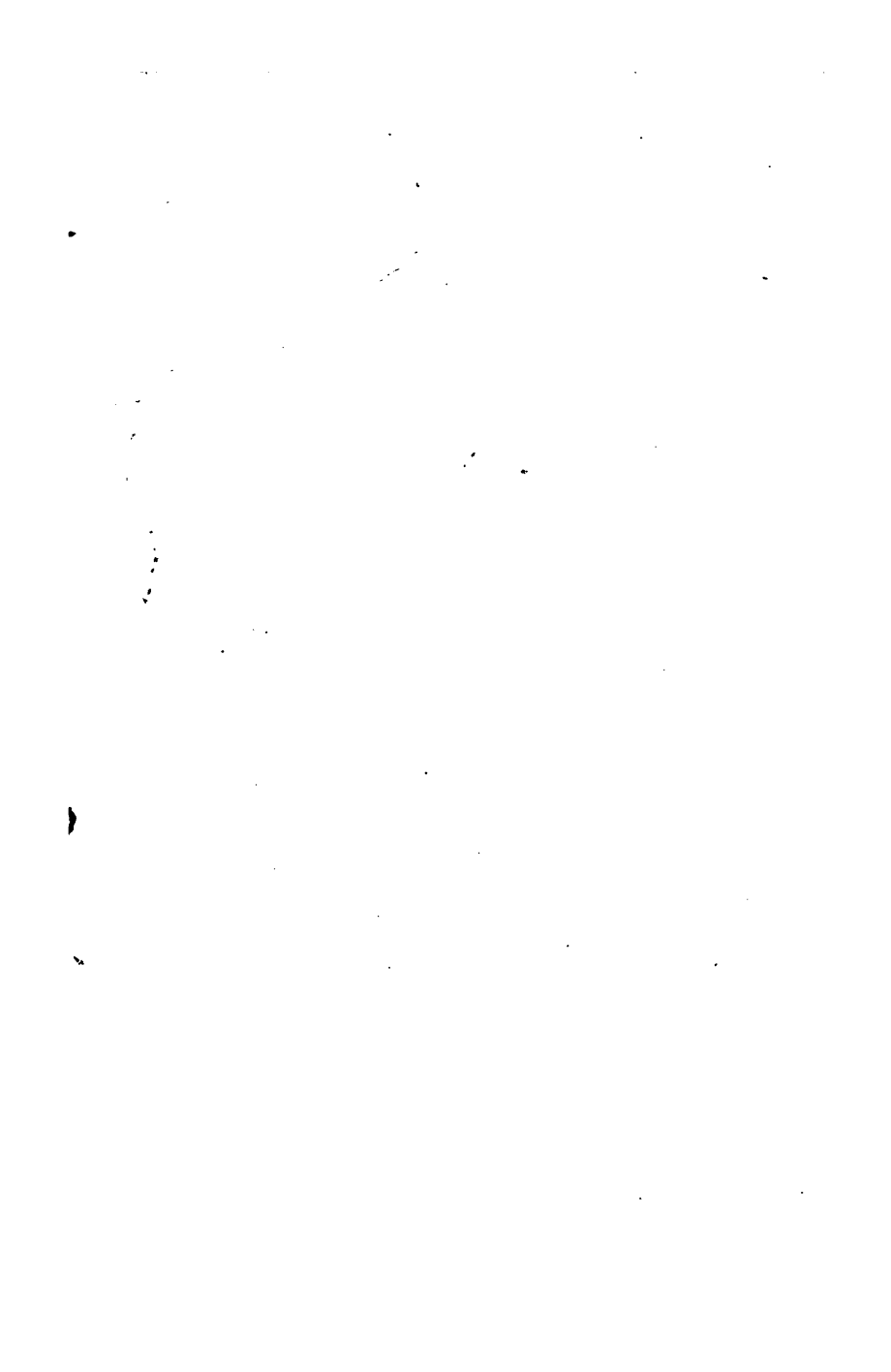


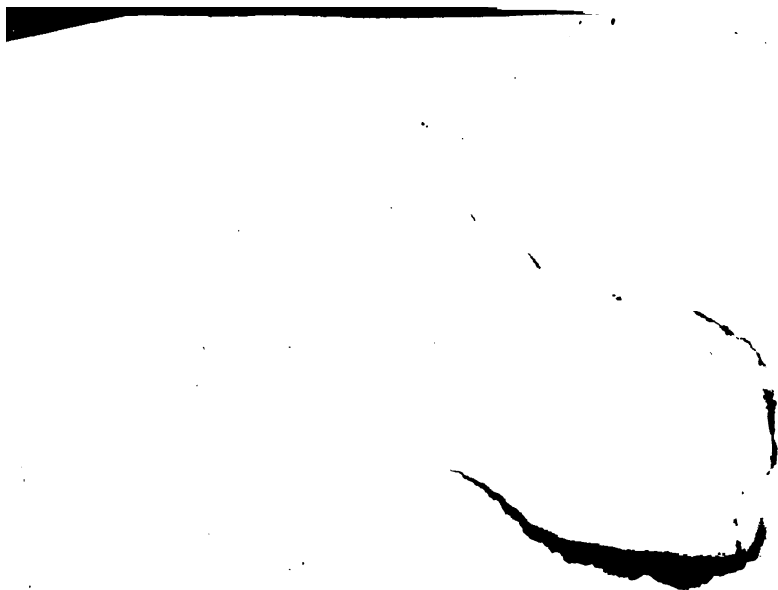
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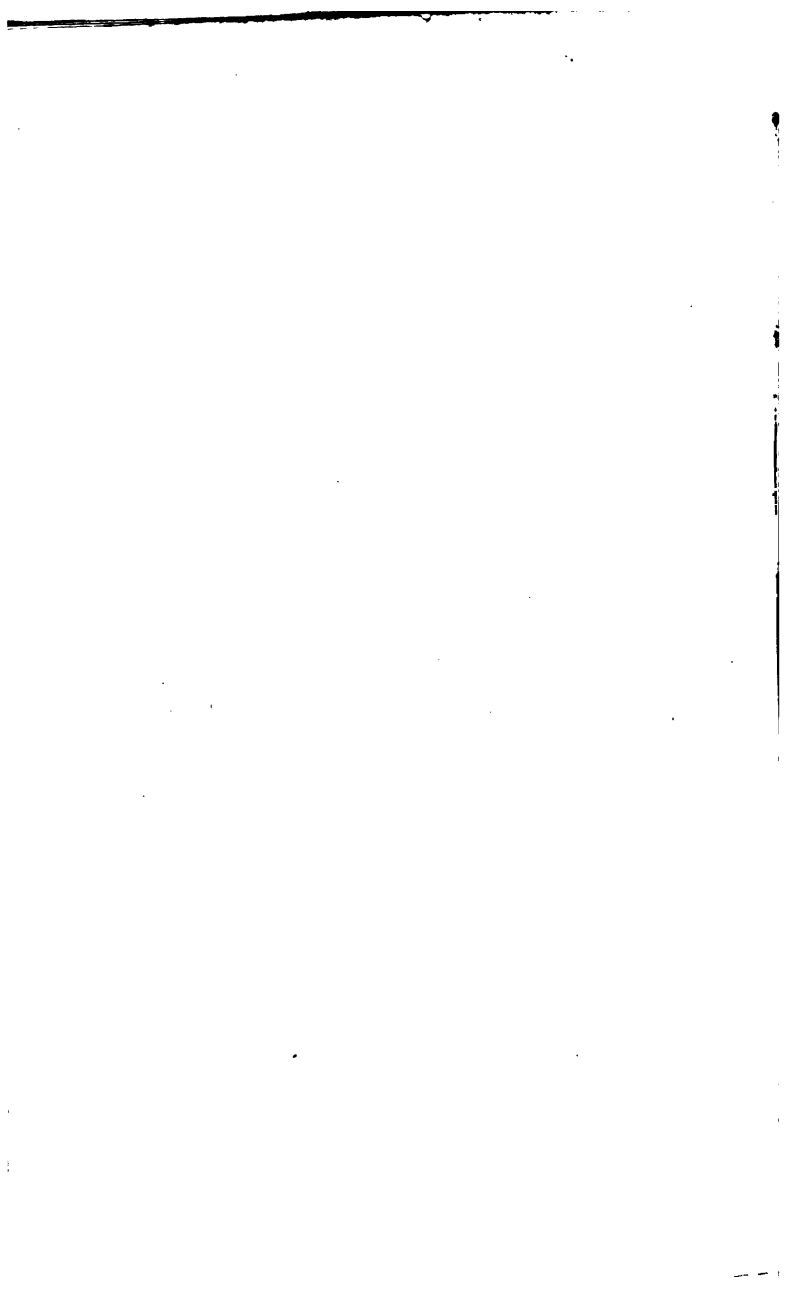
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TO KNOWLEDGE.



N^o. XVII.





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CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND
PRACTICE IN THE
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CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

IT has been said before, but it can hardly be too often repeated, that religion takes its tincture from the degree of civilization in which it finds its professors. The ignorant man cannot *conceive*, he can only see and feel: whatever is to him beyond the reach of his senses, is also beyond the reach of his thoughts, and if he even professes to believe in a God that is invisible to his eyes, he takes the earliest opportunity of making some tangible object the representative of the, to him, absent Deity, and very soon transfers his homage from the abstract idea, to the tangible object thus set up.

It was this tendency of the human mind which made the mode of manifestation adopted by the Father of all things, at the promulgation of Christianity, so peculiarly effectual. Our strongest

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sympathies are with our fellow-creatures ; and it was a fellow-creature who brought the message of God to man. We have difficulty in reaching an abstract idea ; and the Deity deigned to make that human form his temple,* and speak, as from his sanctuary, through human lips. In youth and in temptation it is sometimes not easy to master our passions ; that human soul was sanctified by communion with the indwelling God, till the *man* gained a grandeur of character which, even amid poverty and suffering, made him the object of admiration and love. Example was joined with precept, and the young and admired Teacher passed through all the dangers of his situation with a meek and dignified reserve which won respect even from his enemies, and formed a man so amiable, and at the same time so noble in his bearing and demeanour, that while the poor man might see with pleasure what he himself *might* become, the noble might listen with respectful deference, and gain a lesson for his own manners and conduct.

Whilst he was the object of personal recollection, this sufficed, even to the rudest minds : the

* "Destroy this *temple*, and in three days I will raise it up." John ii. 19.—and see also John xiv. 9.

preachers of Christianity appealed to their remembrance of "the Lord Jesus," when they wished to enforce amendment, either of manners or of morals; and for a time nothing else was needed: but after a century or two had passed away;—when no one could any longer recur to the traditional tales which had been heard in childhood from persons who had lived nearer the time of his sojourn on earth,* even "the man Christ Jesus" became by degrees an abstract idea: and his personal appearance and manners were forgotten in his supernatural powers. Questions as to his nature were now agitated; the actuality of his human body was doubted; and the teachers of Christianity probably did not always object to the custom adopted by many of the Gentile converts, of making likenesses of Christ and his apostles, and keeping them as honoured memorials: since this special recollection would appear the most probable means of keeping alive that affectionate remembrance of the living man which seemed requisite to give full effect to his example. Such statues were not uncommon in the time of Eusebius; and he mentions one very

* See Euseb. Hist. Ecc. lib. v. c. 20, where Polycarp's reminiscences are mentioned. See also Iren. cont. Hæreses, lib. iii. c. 3.

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ancient group* still to be seen in his time, representing the Saviour in the act of healing the woman who had suffered from an issue of blood as mentioned in the gospels. This became yet more common as time advanced ; for we find the emperor Julian ordering the images of Christ to be broken, and his own effigies substituted in their room ; which implies that they were numerous. It was reserved however for a ruder period to give more honour to these resemblances than is usually bestowed on portraits of loved and regretted friends: for the early writers of the church repel indignantly all notion of paying divine homage to any image whatever.

But that period soon arrived : the unsubdued nations which bordered on the Roman empire, made greater and greater encroachments ; and finally after a prolonged struggle of between two and three centuries, the Western portion of it sank before its invaders, and Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. retired no more from the territory they had occupied. Barbarians sate in the palaces of the Cæsars, and brought with them their fierce superstitions, and their uncivilized habits. The

* Euseb. Hist. Ecc. lib. vii. c. 17. This author wrote in the early part of the fourth century.

people groaned under the iron rule of men whose unlettered ignorance made the yoke still more galling; and when oppressed by their civil governors, looked to their spiritual pastors for assistance. These, who had not yet lost the lofty fortitude which had supported their predecessors in the arena, and at the stake, boldly stood in the breach: they had all the power of superior knowledge, and they used it. The motive was so noble that it seemed to justify the means; and taking advantage of the ignorance and superstition of their barbarian invaders, they worked upon their fears by pretended miracles; and by a mixture of craft and courage, subdued the minds of their conquerors. But as is always the case when men allow themselves to seek what they conceive to be worthy ends, by unlawful means, they created fresh evils by the measures they took to avoid the present ones. Whilst thinking that they were spreading the faith of Christ, they were in fact corrupting it and themselves; and the very power which they had sought for good purposes, was soon abused for evil ones.

The barbarian kings who had been made converts to superstitious terrors, not to the pure and gentle religion of Christ, were led to think the public profession of Christianity sufficient for sal-

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vation ; and, as ignorance deepened over the former seats of learning, even the ministers of religion began to attach a value to ceremonies that was quite unknown in the time of the apostles and their immediate successors. The consequence was that *any* means were employed, whether of fraud or severity, which might induce the heathen tribes to receive baptism, to which ceremony an extraordinary efficacy was very early attributed. As soon as the chiefs of the various tribes which had overrun the Western Roman Empire had sufficiently established themselves in their new conquests to be able to attend to other things, they were urged by every motive which was most likely to sway them, to spread the religion of Christ by the terror of their arms. The bordering tribes were fierce and troublesome ;—Christianity would lead them to be more peaceable neighbours ;— the king had not been free from the barbarian vices of his time ;— he might win absolution for his sins by forcing his heathen foes to receive baptism, and at the same time extend his dominions very usefully if he could subdue them : and to a semi-barbarian like Charlemagne and the other monarchs of his time, this was a much easier and pleasanter way of winning heaven, than the simple practice of the duties enjoined by Christ.

During the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries of our era, Saxony, Russia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and many other countries received Christianity; more frequently at the sword's point than in consequence of any grounded conviction of its truth: for this faith with its refined morality, its lofty philosophy, and its pure spiritualism, is the religion of civilized man; and till the mind has been to a certain degree cultivated, it is scarcely possible that it should be received in its entirety. Barbarians will accept it only as a new form of superstition; less degrading indeed than their own polytheistic rites, but still so far mixed with the Visible and the Tangible as to be very unlike what Paul preached upon Mars' hill. The missionaries, either employed by the conquerors, or those who, by working on the fears of these illiterate tribes, persuaded them to embrace the faith they preached, thought it necessary to indulge their wild converts with many of their ancient practices under a new name; and Christianity thus lost by degrees its spiritual character: the rites consecrated to a hero or a demi-god in the days of heathenism, were retained in honour of some Christian saint; and the processions and festivals of these converted idolaters were scarcely less profane and

licentious after their conversion than before. The Christmas gambols still retained in the north of England are the same as celebrated the winter solstice of ancient times; and the old unchristianized name is still heard in the *yule log* and the *yule cake* of Yorkshire.

The process of deterioration was rapid: men of more information, and greater mental power, had used these gifts to delude the ignorant victors *for their good*, as was then imagined: better instruction and more learning would have enabled their converts to see that these "pious frauds" were frauds after all, but this would have been fatal to a faith so taught: it was needful therefore to keep them still in ignorance. Already the sacerdotal caste was beginning to taste the sweets of temporal power, and to view the office rather as a road to this world's wealth and honours, than as an embassy on Christ's behalf; and the retention of this power depended on the keeping princes in subjection by working on the superstition of their people: but the faith of Christ which called for a rational obedience only, to the ministers of God, and a faithful allegiance to the temporal prince, who by the laws of the state held authority in the realm, was not a good tool for this purpose.

Insensibly perhaps to the teachers themselves, the fundamental part of christianity underwent a gradual change, and the church, professing to be always the same, but guided by an ecclesiastical order which was every day becoming more illiterate, was fast returning to idolatry and polytheism ; till amid the general lack of mental culture, though many saw that things were not as they should be—few or none could find a remedy. Sects arose, which were repressed by force, not argument; and about the twelfth century the system, which has since been known chiefly by the name of Romanism, was at its height.

What Christianity was at its first promulgation has already been shewn in No. VII. of these “ small books ;” I shall now show what a barbarous age had made of it ; and by the time my readers have gone through what I shall here produce, I think it will not be needful to remind them that no guidance can suffice to supply the place of a resolute exercise of the reason God has given us ; and that the Church of Christ is not guarded from mistake by any other means than the diligence of its members in seeking the truth, like the Bereans of old, who searched the Scripture “ to see if these

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things were so." Long may it remain the distinguishing mark of the English Church, that it shrinks not from the proof of its doctrines, and asks no credence for its dicta farther than by warranty of Holy Scripture may be justified.

Clement of Alexandria was assumed as the type of the second century, because, first, he filled for many years the office of Catechist, and since he was thus trusted to instruct converts, he must have been considered as himself well grounded in the christian doctrine: and secondly, because his writings are voluminous and various in their subjects; and therefore afford an extended view, both of the doctrine and practice of that age. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, commonly called Saint Bernard, has, for somewhat similar reasons been assumed as the type of the twelfth century. He was a man held in high esteem by all ranks at that time, and presents in his own person a realization of the highest character which that age could conceive, as is shown by his canonization. His writings are voluminous; his moral character was unstained by any gross vice: the judgment which he passes on his contemporaries was therefore likely to be a conscientious one, and if it be erroneous, we must impute it to the system, not the man.

The parents of this celebrated man were of a good family in Burgundy, in which province he was born A. D. 1091, he being their third son. The profligate habits of the times seem early to have disgusted him with the world, and as at that period a monastic life was held to be meritorious, and was at the same time a shelter from the temptations which ordinarily beset young men; he resolved at the age of twenty two, on taking the vows in a religious house of the Cistercian order. It is characteristic of the times that, having resolved to do so himself, he could have no rest until his brothers had done the same; but the elder one being already married to a young lady of noble blood who had just borne him a child, Bernard's wish was not likely to be gratified; for she rejected indignantly the proposal to quit her husband in order to allow him to enter a monastery. "Bernard trusted in God," says his biographer, "and asked of him, most earnestly, that if the wife would not consent to this, He would quickly remove her by death! The prayer," continues the biographer, "was attended to without delay; she fell dangerously ill, and finding that it was hard to kick against the pricks, she sent for Bernard, asked his pardon

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for having resisted his wish, and his assent to her conversion (as it was then called). Being then separated from her husband according to the forms of the church"—both entered separately into different religious houses.

Bernard's next care was for his second brother, who was not more disposed to a monastic life than the elder; and, provoked by his resistance, the youthful zealot, placing his finger on his brother's side, said, "The day will come, and come soon too, when the lance fixed in this side of thine will make way for the counsel thou now despisest." The biographer adds, that the brother, being shortly after wounded in battle, considered this as a prophecy, and professed himself a Cistercian also. The praise which is bestowed on Bernard for the severity of his abstinence, which had so far weakened his stomach that it would no longer digest the food he did allow himself, is another characteristic of the times, when a quiet fulfilment of domestic duties was despised, and nothing was called virtue that was not at variance with the laws of nature; forgetting that these are necessarily also the laws of Nature's God.

We shall see in the extracts which I propose to give from his letters and other writings, as

well as from those of his contemporaries, what were the results of this system. It is not by endeavouring to be something different from what God has made us, that we arrive at the perfection of our nature: the domestic affections were implanted by God in the human heart to soften and purify it; the monastic system was a continual struggle against these; an endeavour to create man afresh, with feelings and tastes different from those which the Creator had bestowed. The two sexes, formed to aid and solace each other, under this system were separated, and made to regard each other as impure, and enemies of a godly life:—social intercourse, without which man's intellect becomes narrowed and diseased, was restrained by compelled silence: the kind of food which the human stomach requires, was denied: cleanliness, without which there is no real health, was forbidden. What followed?—Deprived of all refined pleasures, the monk became gross and bestial in his desires, to which a life so monotonous gave double force; and instead of being better, as the founders of these orders had vainly hoped, became worse than other men. Thus it will ever be when we impose unnatural restraints on human beings; the

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yoke of Christ is easy, for he requires of us only moderation in enjoyment of, and thankfulness for blessings received ; with a patient faith in the paternal care of our Heavenly Father, when by his dispensations they are removed. Nowhere are we required to renounce them voluntarily ; nay, this wilful asceticism is condemned in strong terms by the Apostle of the Gentiles ; for it is invariably attended with some evil consequence. Either the health is ruined, and a useful life cut short ; or spiritual pride and severity of temper are engendered ; or finally, the yoke is too heavy to be borne, and secret and unlawful indulgences are sought to make amends for outward and hypocritical self denial.

These are trite observations : so must be all remarks on the consequences of wrong doing, for men have made the same mistakes in all ages, and as human nature does not alter, those mistakes have constantly had the same results. Every one who studies the past knows this ; but there are so many that do not study the past, and think the reading old books a waste of time, that it becomes needful to repeat it. Those who have read for themselves will not need to come to the " small books " for infor-

mation, or if they do, will not be displeased to see their own thoughts find utterance.

I shall begin my extracts with portions of sermons and treatises on subjects connected with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity ; and having thus given a brief view of what was taught, shall proceed to the style of teaching, and its results on the manners of the age. If in these extracts I should introduce what in some places may appear ludicrous, in others almost blasphemous, I must beg it to be understood that I do it in no mocking spirit : the genuine teaching of Christ and his apostles has nothing in common with the strange quibbles and conceits of the age which I have here called upon to draw a picture of itself : the portrait thus presented may be displeasing, but it is at least a faithful one ; and it may be well to know the features of a time which is now looked at from such a distance that all its distinguishing traits are lost to common observers.

SELECTIONS FROM SEVEN SERMONS ON
THE ADVENT OF OUR LORD.

BY BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX.

“**T**O day, brethren, we celebrate the beginning of Advent ; of which truly, as also of the other solemnities of the Church, the name is sufficiently known and celebrated in the world ; but not so perhaps, the reason of the name. For the unfortunate sons of Adam, having lost all liking for what is good and salutary, seek rather what is fading and transitory. Whereto shall we liken the men of this generation, or whereto shall we compare them, when we see them incapable of tearing themselves away from earthly and corporeal things ? They are like men who are drowning in deep waters : — you will see them laying fast hold on something, nor will they by any means let go of what they first grasp, be it what it may ; and though it may be something quite useless, as roots of herbs and the like.” After following

up this metaphor at some length, he thus continues — “ Do you therefore, my brethren, (since God reveals to his little ones things hidden from the wise and prudent) anxiously cogitate what is really useful, and diligently think over the reason of this Advent ; seeking to know who it is that comes, whence, whither, for what, when, and how ?

“ In the first place, I recommend you, like the Apostle, to consider with wonder and astonishment the greatness of him who comes : for he is,—according to the testimony of Gabriel,—the Son of the Highest, and therefore co-partner in his exaltation (*coaltissimus*). For it is not lawful to suspect the Son of God of being degenerate ; therefore it is needful to confess him equal in exaltation, and fully the same in dignity. Who does not know that the sons of princes are princes, and the sons of kings in like manner kings ? * But why was it that of all the three persons whom we adore and confess in the Trinity, it was not the Father or the Holy Spirit that came, but the Son ? I do not

* Compare this with the exhortations of Clement of Alexandria, “ Small Books ” No. VII. pp. 22, 33. The change in the tone will at once be apparent.

by any means conceive that this happened without good cause. But who knows the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? Neither was it without the highest council of the Trinity that it was fixed that the Son should come: and if we consider the cause of our exile, we may perhaps in part find out why it was proper for the Son chiefly to liberate us. For Lucifer, the son of the morning, because he endeavoured to usurp the likeness of the Most High, and knew it to be a robbery to equalize himself with God, (for that belongs to the Son only) was precipitated from his place, because the Father was jealous for the Son, and by his act seemed to have said 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' Forthwith I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. What art thou that thou art proud, — dust and ashes? If he did not spare the Angels of God, how much less thee, thou lump of putridity and worms. He did nothing (i. e. Satan), he effected nothing, he merely cogitated pride in his heart, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he was irrecoverably cast down, because according to the evangelist 'he abode not in truth.'

“ Let us eschew pride, my brethren, let us anxiously eschew it! Pride is the beginning of

all sins, and that it was which precipitated Lucifer from among the brightest of the stars, into eternal darkness." The preacher then speaks of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, who according to him endeavoured in their turn, at the instigation of Lucifer to steal the privileges of the Son of God; and after expatiating on this through a long paragraph, he proceeds—"Nor was the Father insensible to the injury of the Son, (for the Father loves the Son,) but immediately revenged the wrong upon man, and made his hand heavy upon us. For we have all sinned in Adam, and in him have received sentence of damnation. What does the Son now do, seeing that the Father is very zealous for him, and will not spare any creature? 'Behold,' says he, 'the Father loses his creatures on my account. The first of the Angels sought to be equal with me, and won for his own those who believed him; but immediately the zeal of the Father severely revenged this, afflicting him and his with an incurable wound, and a cruel castigation. In like manner man sought to steal the knowledge which belongs especially to me, and neither did he (God the Father) have mercy on him, neither did his eye pity him.' 'Doth God take care for oxen?' God made only two spe-

cies of noble creatures participating in the gift of reason, capable of felicity,—namely, men and angels: and behold! on my account the angels have lost many of their number, and men the whole. Therefore that they may know that I also love the Father, through me he shall receive again what, in some way through me, he seems to have lost. ‘If for my sake this tempest has arisen,’ says Jonah, ‘take me and cast me into the sea.’ All envy me. Behold I will come, and so exhibit myself to them, that whoever envies, and seeks to imitate me, shall find these envious imitations lead him to what is good.” Much more of the same kind follows: Would the reader wish for a translation of it? I think not. The third sermon opens in a better style.

“In contemplating the person who comes, I am lost in admiration of his excellent majesty: . . . if I consider on what account he came I endeavour to embrace the inestimable breadth of his benevolence, and when I think of it, I perceive the immense improvement in the condition of man; for the Creator and Lord of all things comes on account of man, and he comes as a man. But some one will say ‘How can he be said to come, who is every where at all times?’

He was indeed in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. It was not therefore he who was absent who came, but he who was hidden, who appeared Once, therefore, in a year, the church celebrates the advent of so much majesty, so much benevolence, so much humility, so much glory to ourselves." The preacher here breaks off into one of the extraordinarily coarse metaphors which were not uncommon in those times ;—he blames the mode of keeping Christmas with feasting and gaiety, and exhorts to a renunciation of all worldly delights. As these sermons were preached to monks, he counsels them to aid each other fraternally in the performance of their monastic duties ; and answers the objections of those who say that they can give no counsel, seeing that they are forbidden to speak a word without leave ;—nor assistance, seeing that they are bound by conventual obedience to do only what they are ordered. " You may counsel by your example," he says, " and you may assist by your prayers"—he continues after some farther speech on this subject— " Every one of our virtues is as far from real virtue, as it is from its form ; and every feather of our wings is of no use unless it be silvered " (alluding to the passage in Ps. lxxviii. 15). " A great

feather indeed is poverty, which flies the most quickly to the kingdom of heaven : for in other virtues, it is rather a promise for the future : but this is not so much promised as given : and therefore it is said in the present tense ' theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven,' while in respect to the others it is said they *shall* inherit, they *shall be* consoled, and the like. But we see persons professing poverty, who if they were truly poor, would not be so pusillanimous and sad ; being as they are, kings, and kings of heaven : but these are they who are poor on condition only that they shall want for nothing ; and delight in poverty as long only as they suffer no privation. Others are meek only so long as nothing is said or done against their will ; but if the least occasion arises it is seen how little of real gentleness they possess. How shall that meekness inherit, which is dead before the inheritance is due ? I see others weep, but if these tears proceeded from the heart they would not so easily be changed into smiles : for now they pour out as many idle words and scurril jests, as they did tears just before : hence I conclude that it is not to such tears that divine comfort is promised, since they admit of so easy and vile a consolation. Others are so vehement in their condemnation of others' faults,

that we might think that they hungered and thirsted after righteousness did they but judge their own with equal severity."—The preacher continues through the rest of his sermon to animadvert on the many vices indulged in by the inmates of religious houses; and concludes—
"Let us silver our wings therefore in the company of Christ, as the martyrs washed their robes in his passion. Let us imitate as far as we can, him who so delighted in poverty that he had not where to lay his head, and whose disciples so suffered from hunger that we read they rubbed ears of corn in their hands and ate the dry corn : who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was silent like a lamb that is shorn, and opened not his mouth : whom we read to have wept over Lazarus and over the city, and to have passed the night in prayer, but whom we never hear of as laughing or jesting, and who so thirsted for justice that when he had no sins of his own, he required satisfaction from himself for ours"

In the sixth sermon he addresses himself to the body, and counsels it to be satisfied with its hard fare. "You have a noble guest, O flesh : very noble ; and all your safety depends on his. Give honour to such a guest. You are inhabiting your own residence, but the soul is a pilgrim, and an

exile lodged with you for a time only. I ask you where is the rustic who, if some potent noble wished to lodge with him, would not readily lie in some corner of his house, or under the stairs, or in the ashes, giving up to his guest the place of honour? Do the same then;—think nothing of your own injuries or sufferings if you can but lodge your guest honourably. It is an honour to you if, in the mean time, you exhibit yourself in dishonour for his sake. And do not despise him because he is only a traveller patiently and willingly expose yourself to every thing, that, when he comes to his Lord, he may speak to him of you; saying that, while he lodged with you, he found you ready on his account to bear severe fasts, frequent labour, vigils beyond measure, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness.

“How long, foolish, blind, miserable, and insane flesh will you seek transitory and fading consolations or rather desolations? Do not thus, I beseech you, my brethren; not thus! yea rather let us delight in holy meditation, that even our flesh may rest in hope, expecting the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change it into the resemblance of his glory.”

. In the five sermons on the advent of our

Lord, I cannot discover any thing of practical use or interest excepting the parts I have already quoted. The virtue recommended in preference to all others, is voluntary poverty: a questionable one at any rate, since were poverty commanded, no injunctions for the conduct of the rich would have been given by the apostles; and it might often lead to a question, and not an unreasonable one, whether a law saying perpetually, "touch not, taste not, handle not"—could be given by Him who has surrounded man with so many means of innocent pleasure. The consequence of this kind of preaching will be seen in the frequent lamentations over the conduct of those called "religious persons." I give the sermon on the Vigil of St. Peter and St. Paul entire, in order that the reader may be able to form some conception of the sort of teaching then in vogue.

"In the vigils of the saints it is necessary that the spiritual man who wishes to celebrate these solemnities in spirit and in truth, should watch. But the vigils of the carnal and the spiritual man differ greatly. The one watches that he may be better dressed, and have more splendid entertainments, and perhaps in these

vigils, he also works the works of darkness, rejoices when he has done evil, and exults in his worst actions. You have not so learned Christ, you who have left all; you who with a vigilant eye ought to give heed to the very name of vigils. For to this end we appoint vigils, that if we are sleeping in any sin or negligence, we may wake up, and set ourselves earnestly to confession before the Saints. Not so the children of this world; not so those who are strong to drink wine, and powerful to mix strong drink; who sleep in their crimes and wickedness. It is not hidden from you that those who are drunk are drunk by night, and those who sleep, sleep by night; and vainly to them should we speak of the vigils of the Saints; since they study more to sleep than to watch. But you are not the sons of night and darkness, but of the light and the day: watch; to the end that the dawn of the Saint's day may not find you unprepared.

“ There are three things which we should diligently consider in the festivals of the Saints; namely, the aid of the Saint, his example, and our own confusion. His aid, because he who was powerful on earth, is yet more powerful in heaven before the face of his Lord God. If

while he lived he pitied sinners, and prayed for them ; now he will do so the more from knowing our miseries ; and will entreat the Father for us, because that blessed country will not lessen his charity, but augment it. Neither because he is now impassible is he become uncompassionate, but rather has put on deeper feelings of mercy now that he sits before the fountain of all mercy. There is also another cause which further urges the saints to be solicitors for us ; because, according to the word of the Apostle, ‘ God has provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.’ Or as the holy David says, ‘ the righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.’ We ought also to attend to his example, who, as long as he was seen on earth and conversed with men, turned neither to the right nor the left until he came to Him who has said ‘ I am the way and the truth and the life.’ Look at the humility of his actions, the authority of his words, and you will then see how he shone among men, both by his speech and example ; and note what path he trod, that we may walk in it and not stray. Truly according to the prophet ‘ the way of the just is uprightness.’

“ But upon a closer inspection we shall see

our own confusion, because he was a passible man like us, and formed of the same clay. What then is the reason that we think it not only difficult but impossible to do the works which he did, and to follow in his steps. We may well be confounded, brethren, and may well tremble at these words, doubting whether this confusion will bring us glory, and whether this fear will generate grace in us. These men who preceded us, walked in the paths of life so wonderfully that we can hardly believe them to be men: therefore in the festivals of the Saints we should both rejoice and be confounded:—rejoice, because our patrons have preceded us,—feel confounded because we cannot imitate them. Thus always our joy in this valley of tears should be fed with the bread of tears, so that not only the end but the beginning of our joy may be in grief: for though there may be cause for joy, there is much greater cause for sorrow. ‘*Memor fui Dei*’ says the just man ‘*et delectatus sum:*’ but he quickly adds ‘*Defecit spiritus meus, turbatus sum, et non sum locutus.*’*

* Ps. lxxvi. 3, 4. I have quoted the words, because they are from the Latin Vulgate, which differs from our

“ If then such ought to be our meditations on the vigil of any saint, what shall we do in the festival of the most holy and chief of the Apostles? I speak of Peter and Paul. The festival of one of them would be enough to inspire joy through the whole earth, but both are joined, for a completion of satisfaction, that as in life they loved one another, so in death they should not be divided. Who could be more potent than they while they were on earth, to one of whom were given the keys of heaven, to the other the teaching of the Gentiles? of whom one slew Ananias and Sapphira by the words of his mouth, the other gives whatever he bestows in the person of Christ, and who when he is weak is then the stronger and more powerful? How much more potent must they be in heaven who were so potent upon earth! and who has left us a greater example than they who were continually afflicted with hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness and with all the other things which Paul enumerates, and lastly ascended to heaven by a blessed martyrdom. Verily to us is confusion of face; to us who can scarcely look up to

translation. The small applicability they have would have been lost, had I quoted the English version.

them, not to speak of imitating. Let us pray to them therefore that they will render their friend propitious to us, him who is also our judge, and who is God blessed for ever."

. It is difficult to make any selection even from the sermons and moral treatises of this century which would not be insupportably tedious to the reader, from the habit then prevailing of endeavouring to find hidden meanings in every word of the text. I will take as a sample of this style some passages from a sermon on the Advent of our Lord, by Aldred, Abbot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire.

"It is time, my beloved brethren, that we should celebrate the justice and mercy of God: for it is the Advent of the Lord, the Omnipotent who came, and will come again. But how will he come, or has he come? for he says 'I fill the heavens and the earth.' How can he come either to heaven or earth who fills both? hear the Evangelist 'he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not'—therefore he was both present and absent: present, because he was in the world; absent, because the world knew him not." It is then discussed why he came, "that

he might be known who was not known; believed on, who was not believed on," &c. The hearers are then called upon to consider the greatness of God who thus came, and the preacher continues:—"Behold the oil before which the yoke of our captivity decays, as says the holy Isaiah: 'In that day his burthen shall be taken off from thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing'—What day is it? What burthen? What yoke? Hear what the same prophet says, 'The Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, (the king of Assyria) according to the slaughter of Midian, at the rock of Oreb; as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner* of Egypt.' The devil therefore, who is the king over all the sons of pride, being scourged and driven off, the Lord lifted his rod over the sea, and raised it in the way of Egypt. The sea is the bad world;—the rod, the cross;—the way of Egypt, that broad and spacious road which leads to destruction

* The Latin Vulgate has it "et levabit eam in via Egypti" i. e. he will lift it in the way or path of Egypt. As this version is the only one used in the Romish church, the preacher proceeds to comment upon the words in this sense. The Hebrew will bear either interpretation.

Truly, Lord, thy cross restrains the waves of the world, quiets its tempests, mitigates the storms of persecution and temptation. Thou hast lifted it in the way of Egypt, that the broad way which leads to death being thereby obstructed, thou mightest turn us into the narrow path which leads to life." The preacher then adds that the day when the burthen was to be removed, is the day of grace through Christ, and goes on—"What is the burthen? We read in scripture of many sorts of burthens. The holy Isaiah in his prophecy describes eleven burthens;* 1. The burthen of Babylon. 2. Of Philistia. 3. Of Moab. 4. Of Damascus. 5. Of the Desert of the Sea. 6. Of Egypt. 7. Of Dumah. 8. Of Arabia. 9. Of the Valley of Vision. 10. Of Tyre. 11. Of the Beasts of the South." He then explains these burthens.

"The first which must be taken from our shoulders is the burthen of Babylon. Babylon signifies the world, and the love of it, which is covetousness; and its burthen is threefold, consisting of 1. labour, 2. fear, and 3. grief. With

* It is hardly requisite to explain that the burthen here mentioned is the heavy prophecy against, or *weird* upon certain nations.

labour a man gains what he wishes, he possesses it in fear, and he loses it with grief Do none of us groan under this burthen? Do no worldly thoughts reside among us? . . . what do those do, who are so bound by the love of their relations that they do not scruple to submit to all sorts of toil for them, at the expense of religion; and pass sleepless nights and waste days on this account Therefore, brethren, all these—(namely the ambitious, the irascible, the luxurious, and *the lovers of their relations*) are conformed to this world, &c.

“ The next is the burthen of Philistia, which is interpreted, *those who fall, from having taken a potion*, and signifies those who, being drunk with pride, fell from the celestial habitations. These load their miserable victims, now with temptations and now with sufferings, &c.

“ The burthen of Moab follows, which is interpreted *from the father*.—This expresses the necessities of our nature, which are transmitted from father to son, as the necessity of eating, of drinking, of sleeping, and all other things which pertain to the care of the body” and here the preacher takes occasion to blame the luxury of the monks in somewhat coarse terms, and continues, “ brethren, those who live in this way

are of a carnal generation and deserve the name of Moab."

"The prophet next adds the burthen of Damascus. This, being interpreted, means *one that sheds blood*, and expresses our innate corruption which drags us to sin, although unwilling. This is the law of our members, &c. &c.

"He next adds the burthen of Egypt. Egypt means darkness: there is a darkness of ignorance, there is another darkness of iniquity. Come brethren, this burthen of our ignorance which we blindly carry, is not light; for we know not, in many things, what is good; what to praise or what to blame; and often call evil good, and good evil. We know not what to pray for, and we walk in the light of the Scriptures, like persons feeling their way in the dark," &c.

All the other burthens are considered in the same manner and at considerable length: the reader would be wearied were I to go through them.

The following extracts are from five sermons on the Assumption of the Virgin, by St. Bernard.

"The ascension of the glorious Virgin, as on this day, into heaven, without doubt augmented

the joy of the citizens of that world, with a copious increase The precious boon of to-day brings our earth to heaven, and by bestowing and receiving in the happy compact of friendship, unites the human with the divine, the earthly with the celestial, the low with the exalted—for to that place from whence descend the best and most perfect gifts, the fruits of the earth ascend. Therefore the blessed Virgin ascends on high, and herself, in her turn, gives gifts to men. What does she give? since she cannot want either the power or the will. She is the Queen of Heaven, she is merciful, finally she is the mother of the only begotten Son of God. Nothing can so much commend the greatness of her power or her pity, unless indeed it should be thought that the Son of God does not honour his mother; or any one should doubt, a thing hardly possible, that there is any lack of charity in the bosom of Mary, in whom the mercy of God lay corporeally during nine months.”

In this style the preacher continues through the whole first sermon. The gifts which the Virgin was to bestow are not particularized; her glory in giving birth to the Saviour is alone dwelt upon. He takes as the text for his second, Luke x. 38, and insists on the mystical sense of this entrance into the village of Bethany and the

house of Martha. The third is devoted to the same subject; and he thus discusses the meaning of that better part which Mary is said to have chosen.

“What is meant by the saying that Mary had chosen the better part? What becomes of what we are wont to say when speaking of the bustle and disturbance which Martha was causing, i. e. ‘Better is the iniquity of a man than a beneficent woman.’* What becomes of the sayings ‘If any man serve me, him will my Father honour,’ † and ‘Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.’ ‡ . . . I judge one of two things, either that the part of Mary is praised, because that part, as far as in us lies, ought to be chosen for all, or—because she was ready to obey in whatever was commanded her.”

With so fair an opportunity of pointing out what is that better part, however, nothing more to the purpose is said: and again, all practical deductions are overlooked, in the straining after mystical meanings. He thus proceeds:—

* *Melius est iniquitas viri quam beneficiens mulier.*”
Eccles. xlii. 14,—Latin Vulgate translation.

† John xii. 26.

‡ Matt. xx. 26.

“ Let us consider, my brethren, how in this house the three parts of christian love were distributed : to Martha the active administration, to Mary contemplation, to Lazarus penitence, and every perfect soul has all these three in itself ; but to some, one, to others, another, may seem more particularly to belong ; for some prefer holy contemplation ; some again are addicted to fraternal administration ; others in bitterness of soul go over their early years, when they were like the wounded sleeping in the tomb. Thus it plainly ought to be,—that Mary should feel piously and sublimely respecting her God ; Martha benignantly and compassionately of her neighbour ; and Lazarus sadly and humbly of himself.” . . .

The preacher passes on from this to the Canticles, a favorite book with mystics of all times, and invites his hearers to take part in the nuptial song. In the fourth sermon he returns to the Assumption of the Virgin, whom he again magnifies with all the rhetoric he is master of ; and then goes back, without much apparent cause, to Lazarus lying in the tomb four days. He thus comments on it.

“ What is meant by,—‘ Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath lain in the tomb four days.’

It is possible that this putrefaction, and these four days will not be understood by every one : I explain the first day to be the fear of God which, irradiating our hearts, we die to sin, and are buried in our own conscience. The second, if I mistake not, is spent in the labour of the contest The third is that of grief, while we go over our past years That of shame and confusion follows, and then it is that the voice of mercy is heard, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’”

In the same way the words, “Take away the stone,” &c. are commented upon ; and then the Virgin is again panegyricized. The fifth is devoted wholly to the praises of the Virgin, and her history is traced in the woman clothed with the sun, mentioned in the Apocalypse : and the whole concludes with a prayer that she would feed her servants with the crumbs from her table.

* * The part of Scripture, however, which was chiefly commented on by the preachers of that time, was the Canticles, or Song of Solomon. Gilbert Abbot of Hoyland has forty-eight, and St. Bernard eighty-six sermons on this book. The first three versicles give rise to twenty-two sermons ! I take a part of the twenty-third as a specimen.

“Cant. i. 4. ‘The king hath brought me into his chambers.’ Behold from whence comes the sweet odour; (v. 3) behold whither we run. We have been told already why we are to run, and in what we are to run; but whither we are to run is not told. It is then to the chambers of the king that we are to run; and we are to run after the sweet savour which proceeds from them;—the bride by her wonted sagacity discovering him, and wishing to be introduced to the plenitude of his love. But what do we think to hear from these chambers? We think of them as redolent of the bridegroom, full of perfumes, overflowing with delights . . . Thither then all run.—Who?—souls fervent in the spirit. The bride runs, and her maidens run; but she who loves the most ardently, runs the fastest, and arrives the soonest. Arriving, she does not suffer, I will not say a repulse, but not even a delay. The door is opened to her as to one of the family; as to one the most dear, the most especially favoured, the most singularly beloved” . . .

I will pass over three or four pages of similar writing, in which he finds that there are three seasons in “the history of the garden,” and three chambers in the habitation of the king, and three stages of instruction, namely, as disciple, assistant, and master; and then he takes

“occasion from the word chambers, which the Holy Spirit has thought fit to use, to give two names to them, and call one the aromatic, and the other that of sweet ointments. The cause of these titles we shall see afterwards I think if you have well understood the properties of the chambers, I shall not appear to have distinguished them improperly by these two names. In one, as the aromatic fragrance of flowers is crushed and squeezed out of them by violent beating, so the force of the master sometimes presses and draws out, as it were, the natural strength of right conduct by the weight of discipline” —

Probably my readers will be glad to be excused from any more of this unprofitable trifling, which is pursued through five pages more : I will therefore give merely the conclusion —

“But there is a place where God is seen really quiescent, and tranquil ; in the situation not of judge, or of magistrate, but of bridegroom ; and there will be clearly seen God’s mercy from all eternity, and through all eternity, to those who fear him Oh, place of real quiet ! which I have justly called the sleeping chamber ; in which God is seen, not as disturbed with wrath or distressed with care, but as showing his will to be

good, and well pleasing, and perfect. This sight does not terrify, but softens;—does not excite unquiet curiosity, but allays it;—does not fatigue the senses, but tranquillizes them. Here is true rest; God being tranquil, tranquillizes all things, and to behold what is at rest, is to rest. The king is to be seen, as it were, after the diurnal business of the forum, having dismissed the crowd, leaving the fatigue of his regal cares, seeking the repose of night, and entering his chamber with a few chosen persons” (I cannot go on with what we should now consider something very like blasphemy) “and now that I have spoken at length of the chamber, the garden and the sleeping apartment, keep it in your memory: remember the three seasons, the three merits, the three rewards And now what is said may suffice. I will not repeat it, lest,—which be far from me,—these things should weary you which are spoken of the praise and glory of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

. These sermons were so much admired, that we find the following letter written in consequence.

Evervinus the humble minister of Steinfeld to his reverend father and lord, Bernard Abbot of Clairvaux.

“ I rejoice in your eloquence like one who finds a great treasure . . . and chiefly in what relates to the song of love between the bridegroom and the bride : that is, Christ and the Church : so that we may truly say to the bridegroom, ‘ Thou hast kept thy good wine until now ’ . . . Some heretics were lately discovered among us at Cologne of whom some returned with satisfaction to the church ; but two of them, who were called the Bishop and his Associate, in an assembly both of clergy and laics, the lord Archbishop himself, with many noble persons, being present, undertook to defend their heresy against us, from the words of Christ and his apostles. But when they saw that they could not proceed by themselves, they asked to have a day appointed in which they might bring forward men well informed in their faith, promising that they would again join the church if they should find their doctors fail in their reply : otherwise they had rather die than give up their opinion. Which being known, and they having been admonished

for three days, and refusing to recant ; the people moved by too much zeal, seized upon them,— but against our will, — and placing them in the fire, they burnt them : and what is most remarkable of all, these persons bore the torment of the flames not only with patience, but with joy ; thus entering the fire at first, and thus bearing it all through. And here, holy father, if I were present with you, I would ask you to answer me as to why these members of the devil should have such fortitude in their heresy, when it is hardly to be found at all among those who are very devout in the faith of Christ ?

“ Their heresy was this. They said that the church was to be found only among them ; since they only trod in the steps of Christ, and remained the true followers of the Apostles ; since they did not seek the goods of this world, nor house, nor fields, nor any peculiar property : for as Christ had no possessions, so he did not allow his disciples to have any. ‘ You,’ they say to us, ‘ add house to house, and field to field, and seek the things of this world ; so that even those who are held the most perfect among you, such as monks and canons, although they do not have possessions individually, have them collectively, and are rich in all luxuries.’ They say of them-

selves, 'we are the poor of Christ . . . suffering persecution in common with the Apostles and Martyrs, and leading a life of fasting and abstinence, remaining day and night in prayer' . . . 'We sustain this,' they say, 'because we are not of this world, but you are lovers of this world, and you are at peace with it because you are of it. False apostles adulterating the word of Christ, who sought only their own pleasure, made you and your fathers transgress,—we and our fathers remain in the faith of Christ, and shall so remain.'—In their food these heretics avoid milk, and every thing made therefrom, and in general every thing produced by animal generation. In their sacraments they hide their practice under the veil of secrecy ; but they openly profess that, when they eat their daily meals, they consecrate their food and drink as the body and blood of Christ by repeating the Lord's prayer ; and thus nourish themselves as members of his body. They also profess that they baptize not merely with water, but with the Holy Spirit, and with fire ; grounding this upon the words of John ; 'He will baptize with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.' They do not set any value on our baptism, and they condemn marriage ; but I could not obtain from them the reason of this ; either

because they were ashamed to avow, or were ignorant of it.*

“ There are also other heretics in our land, quite different from these; and by their mutual discord both were detected. They deny that the body of Christ is made on the altar the apostolic dignity, they say, is corrupted by being engaged in temporal things . . . they reject all our sacraments except baptism; and that they require to be performed on adults; for they have no faith in the baptism of infants: moreover they call every marriage adulterous which is not contracted between such, whether male or female, as are still pure from other connection, adducing the words, ‘whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder’ † and what follows, as well as ‘Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.’ ‡

“ They do not believe in the aid of the Saints :

* These persons were probably Manichean in their notions, and considered matter as the source of evil. Hence the perpetuation of the species by marriage was but a perpetuation of evil. From the earliest times this opinion prevailed in the Oriental nations, and Gnostics, Manicheans, &c. all mixed some Oriental philosophy with their views of Christianity.

† Matt. xix. 6—9.

‡ Heb. xiii. 4.

—fasting and other macerations of the body they hold to be unnecessary to the just, and even to sinners; because in the day that the sinner repents and turns from his evil ways, in that day he is forgiven. The other ceremonies of the Church, not commanded by Christ and his apostles, they hold to be superstition. They do not believe in purgatory; and think that the spirit when it leaves the body goes either into peace or punishment, according to the words of Solomon, ‘where the tree falls there will it lie;’ —thus doing away altogether with the prayers of the faithful for the dead.

“ We pray you, holy father, to watch against these multifarious evils . . . for we would wish you to know that those who have returned to the church inform us that there are great numbers spread over the whole earth; and that many of our priests and monks hold their opinions. Those who were burnt told us in their defence, that this their heresy lay concealed since the time of the martyrs, and was to be found in Greece and other countries; and there are those who call themselves apostles, and have a pope of their own. Others refuse obedience to our pope, but have none whom they submit to. These apostles of Satan have women among

them some elect, others believers ; almost in the manner of the apostles, to whom was conceded the power to have women in their company. Farewell in the Lord."

. This letter gave rise to some sermons, from which I extract the following passages.

" I have already made two sermons on one chapter : I now prepare a third, if you are not weary of listening : and I think it necessary. In what regards our domestic vine, namely yourselves,* I think I have said enough to guard you against the snares of the three kinds of foxes ; namely flatterers, calumniators, and seducers but with regard to the vineyard of the Lord it is not so. I speak of that which fills the whole earth, and of which we are a portion I am moved by the multitude of those who seem to have undertaken her demolition, the paucity of defenders, the difficulty of the defence. The difficulty lies in the occult nature of the

* It should be remembered that in the Romish Church there is no public preaching excepting on very particular occasions : the sermons therefore which are handed down to us were preached to the inmates of religious houses, as well male as female. This will in part account for the very little of practical christian duty enforced in them.

attack; for the church always had foxes from the beginning, but they were easily discovered and taken. . . . But what are we to do with these malignant foxes that do not choose to show themselves? Taught, as I believe, by the former examples of those who, having spoken openly, were not able to escape, but were presently taken; this new kind of evil doers seeks concealment . . . they swear, they forswear, but they will not betray their secret"—

Here follows some coarse vituperation, and the preacher continues,

“ I shall be silent as to what they deny, let them reply to what is manifest. . . . Reply to me, O man who knowest more than thou oughtest, and who art silly beyond what can be expressed, Is the mystery which thou hidest, of God, or not? If it be, why not publish it for his glory? If not, why dost thou put faith in what is not of God, unless because thou art a heretic? ”

Much of this kind follows, and then he goes on to blame the having women in their company.

“ Every day you sit at table with young women your eyes look upon them in conversation, your hands are employed in work with theirs, and you claim to be thought chaste? Be

it so, but I have my suspicions; it is a scandal to me, remove it. . . . Help me, my friends and companions, that we may take them.—(i. e. the heretics above mentioned.) To you, as to the companions of the spouse, are the words addressed. ‘Take us the little foxes.’—Do therefore what you are commanded, and take us this cunning little fox, which we have pursued so long in vain. Show how the fraud may be detected and defeated; since this is taking the fox: for who can do more harm than the false catholic, who is an heretic whilst he appears a true believer.”

The sermon finishes amid these exhortations to catch the foxes. The next begins thus:

“Cant. ii. 15. ‘Take us the foxes, the little foxes, which spoil the vines.’—Behold here I am, after these foxes. These are they who quit the right road, and spoil the vines. They are not content to leave the road, unless they can also leave the vineyard, adding thereto false dealing. It does not suffice to them to be merely heretics, unless they are also hypocrites, that thus they, in sinning, may be extraordinary sinners. These are they who come in sheep’s clothing to take their fleeces from the sheep, and spoil the rams. Do you not see that these two things happen when the people are plundered of

their faith, and the priests of their people. And who are these thieves? They are sheep in their dress, foxes in cunning;—in cruelty and actions, wolves. They are those who wish to seem good, not to be so: who wish not to appear bad, but are so. They are bad, and wish to appear good, that they may not be alone in their badness: they fear to seem bad lest their numbers should be too few Neither is virtue cultivated among them, but they colour their vices as it were with the vermilion of virtue. They are rustic and unlearned men, and altogether contemptible; but not therefore, to be neglected.”..

Several pages of like style follow, in which their restrictions upon marriages are animadverted on, and the preacher thus proceeds:

“ See the back-biters,—see the dogs! They ridicule us for baptizing infants, for praying for the dead, for asking the patronage of the saints. Thus they hasten to exclude from Christ the whole human race, of all ranks and ages and both sexes, adults and infants, the living and the dead: infants, namely, by natural incapacity; adults by the difficulty of the continence which they prescribe. Farthermore, they deprive the dead of aid from the living; and the living no less of the patronage and prayers of the dead.

Heaven forbid ! The Lord will not cast off his people who are as the sands of the sea shore, nor will he who redeemed all, be content with a handful of heretics :—for his redemption, far from being scanty, was most copious : and what proportion would there then be between the number of the redeemed, and the price paid. . . . What if the infant cannot speak for himself? . . . his mother the church, nevertheless, stands and makes the claim for him ; what need then that the infant should do it himself? Does he not seem in some sort to sigh for the fountain of the Saviour, and to exclaim in his infantile cries,— ‘ Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me.’* He asks for the aid of grace because he is oppressed by nature Let no one say that he has not faith to whom his mother imparts hers, is the cloak so small that it cannot cover both?—

. . . “ They do not believe in the fire of purgatory after death. . . . Let them ask of him who said that there was a sin which should not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the next, why he said this, if there were in the future world no remission or purgation of sin? But indeed it is no wonder if they who do not

* Isaiah xxxviii. 14.

acknowledge the church, despise its orders, refuse to comply with its institutions, contemn its sacraments, and disobey its mandates. They say archbishops, bishops, and priests are sinners, and therefore not fit to give or receive the sacraments, and that it is not proper that a man who is a sinner should be a bishop. This is false; for Caiaphas was a bishop; and yet how great a sinner was he who condemned the Lord to death.

“ Many other things are advanced by these stupid people in the spirit of error, telling lies in hypocrisy, but it is needless to reply to all; for who knows every thing? Besides the labour would be infinite and unnecessary, since as regards them, they can neither be convinced by reason, because they cannot understand it, nor corrected by authority, because they do not acknowledge it; nor prevailed on by persuasion, because they are utterly perverted. It has been tried, and they have chosen to die rather than be converted. Of these the end is, that they perish for ever; for them the final fire is prepared: of these, in fact, the foxes which Samson tied together with fire at their tails, are an appropriate type. The faithful having laid hands on some of these, dragged them into the midst.

When questioned as to their faith, which appeared to be doubtful; they, as usual, denied every thing imputed to them: but when examined by the ordeal of water, they were found liars. When they could deny no longer, being found guilty by their refusal of the water;—for they were thus caught, as the saying is, with the bit in their teeth;—they then, as deplorably as boldly, not only confessed, but professed their impiety; considering it as piety, and being ready to die for it. Nor were those who heard them less ready; therefore the people setting upon them, these heretics had their martyrs. We approve the zeal, but we do not recommend the act for imitation; since faith should be the subject of persuasion, not force; although it is certainly better that they should be coerced by the sword,—of those, namely, who not without cause bear the sword,—than that they should be permitted to draw many into their error: for he is the minister of God, who is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth ill.*

“Some are surprised that they met death not only with patience but, as it appeared, with joy: but these persons do not consider the power of

* Rom. xiii. 4.

the devil, not only in the bodies of men, but in the hearts which he has once been allowed to possess. Is it not harder for a man to lay violent hands on himself than to suffer from others; yet how much the devil can do in these matters is seen frequently in those who hang and drown themselves.

“ Since therefore these things are so, it is not needful to say much against these stupid and obstinate men: it is enough to point them out in order that they may be avoided. Wherefore, in order that they may be caught, they must be compelled either to renounce their women, or else to leave the church, as giving an occasion of scandal by eating, and living in the same house with women. It is much to be lamented that not only lay princes, but also as it is said some clergy, even of the order of bishops, who ought rather to prosecute them, favour them on account of worldly lucre, receiving gifts from them. How, they say, can we condemn men who are neither convicted of, nor have confessed any crime. This is a frivolous excuse, not a reason: for they (the heretics) could easily be discovered, even if there were no other method, if, as I have recommended, the men and women, who, as they say, live continently together, were separated

from each other, and the women were compelled to live with those of their own sex, and really fulfil their vow, and the same with respect to the men. For by thus doing they would consult at once their good fame and their vow, having thus witnesses and guards of their chastity."

* * * All this is sufficiently disgusting—but I have not expunged it, because it is well to know that the enforced vows of monks did not bring with them purity of either mind or conduct. Those who suspect so much of evil, find the spring overflowing in their own hearts. To modern readers most of the extracts given will appear jejune, and devoid of sound argument or practical application; yet they are fair specimens of the usual writing of this century, and thousands of pages may be turned over without finding anything more christian, or more rational.

It is now time, however, to notice one bright exception from this sweeping condemnation; not in morals,—for he was in this respect as corrupt as his times;—but in clearness of intellect and vigorous expression. Who has not heard of Abelard, whose fate as a lover Pope has celebrated in some of his finest lines? but whose quondam fame as a professor of abstruse theo-

logy, is known comparatively to few. He was born A. D. 1070, studied at Paris, and soon became famous, no less for his acuteness in logic, than for the beauty of his person, and his skill in lighter accomplishments. Our business is not however with his unfortunate intrigue and marriage, but with his writings; which gave great offence to the clergy of his time, and drew upon him the virulent animadversions of St. Bernard, who, as appears by his letters, engaged with much activity in calling a synod in which the supposed errors of the professor might be considered and condemned.

“There is a general talk,” says Bernard in a letter to the Bishops convened to a Synod at Sens — “and I believe it has reached you, that we are to be called to Sens about Pentecost, to contend for the defence of the faith the friend of the bridegroom must not desert the bride in her tribulation, neither must you be surprised that you are called together thus suddenly, and at short notice, because in this also the cunning of the adverse party is considered, &c.”

His next address is the following: —

“To the reverend lords and fathers, the bishops and cardinals who are of the Curia at Rome, the disciple of their sanctities greeting.”

“There is no doubt that to you it specially be-

longs to take away the scandal from the kingdom of God, by rising up to cut away the thorns, and to quiet the complaints which occur. Thus also Moses commanded when he ascended the mount, saying, You have Aaron and Hur with you, and whatever question arises, refer it to them. I speak of that Moses who came through water; and not in water alone, but in water and blood: and because in the room of Aaron and Hur, there is the zeal and authority of the Roman church over the people of God, we rightly refer to it, not the questions only, but the damages of the faith, and the injuries of Christ; the dishonour and contempt of the fathers; the scandal to the present, the peril to the future generation. The faith of the simple is derided; the secrets of God torn open: questions of the highest nature are lightly discussed, and the fathers are insulted because they thought such questions should rather be passed over than solved. Hence it is that the Paschal Lamb, against the divine law, is either cooked in water, or torn up raw, in the fashion of, and in the mouth of beasts. What remains is not burnt in the fire, but trodden under foot.* Thus every thing is claimed by human reason,

* This is an exact translation. The appropriateness of the metaphor is not very apparent in either language.

nothing reserved for faith : it attempts (i. e. human reason) things higher than itself, scrutinizes things stronger, rushes into things divine, violates rather than unlocks holy places :—those shut and sealed it does not open, but breaks into, and those into which it cannot penetrate, those it thinks nothing of, and disdains to believe.

“ Read if it please you, the book of Peter Abelard, and what he says upon theology, (for you have it at hand ; since, as he boasts it is read by many in the Curia ;) and see what he says of the Holy Trinity, of the generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Spirit, and other things innumerable to which Catholic ears and minds are quite unaccustomed. Read also in his sentences ; . . what he says of the soul of Christ ; of the person of Christ ; of his descent into Hell ; of the sacrament of the altar ; of the power of binding and loosing ; of original sin ; of concupiscence ; of the sin of choice, the sin of infirmity, and the sin of ignorance ; of the work of sin ; of the will to sin ;—and according as you judge me to be justly moved, be ye also moved. And that ye may not be moved in vain, act, in virtue of the post which you hold, the dignity which you bear, and the power which you have received ; that the works of darkness which have dared to make their appearance in daylight, may be dis-

cussed by the light, in the light; and while he who sins publicly is publicly reproved, those also may be repressed who put darkness for light, disputing of divine things in the highways: who speak evil in their hearts, and write it in their books, so that thus the mouth speaking iniquity may be closed."

* * To the same effect, but yet more virulently, he writes to Pope Innocent; who being under obligations to him for maintaining his cause against a rival, or antipope, was likely to attend to him. After much vituperative metaphor he thus proceeds:—

"Now comes Goliath, high in stature, surrounded with a noble apparatus of war, and his squire, Arnold of Brescia, going before him . . . But thou, O successor of Peter! wilt judge whether there is to be any refuge at the seat of Peter for him who combats against the faith of Peter. Thou, I say, the friend of the bridegroom, wilt take care to deliver the bride from wicked lips and fraudulent tongues. But to speak somewhat more boldly with my lord, look also to thyself, most loving father, and to the grace of God which is in thee. Did he not, when thou wert small in thine own eyes, place thee over peoples and kingdoms? and why did

he this, unless it were that thou shouldst pull up and destroy, and plant and build? . . . Therefore, O loving father, catch us the foxes which spoil the vineyard of our Lord, while they are yet small, lest if they grow and multiply, such of them as you have not exterminated, should cause posterity to give the matter up in despair. For they are not now either small or few, but certainly large and many, and will not be destroyed by you but with a strong hand."

* * * It is needless to add more from the many letters addressed by him to different persons on this subject, since all are in the same strain; I shall rather give some extracts from Abelard's own works, that the reader may judge for himself. The following is his account of the proceedings of the Synod called to take cognizance of his heresies.

"It happened that I had applied myself to the discussing the foundations of our faith by the ordinary means of human reason; and had composed a theological treatise On the Variety and Trinity of the Divine Nature, for the use of my scholars, who asked for human and philosophical arguments on this point; and wished rather to hear what could be understood, than

to know what could be said: for, as they observed, the out-pouring of words is of little avail if the understanding cannot follow them; and it is not possible to believe what is not first understood: furthermore they thought it ridiculous to preach to others what the preacher himself could not comprehend: the Lord himself having blamed the making blind men leaders of the blind. Which treatise, when many had seen and read it, began to give much pleasure to most; because in it the questions upon these points seemed to be solved. And because these questions seemed to be difficult above all others, the gravity of the question was thought to make the solution yet more admirable. Hereupon my enemies and rivals, being greatly angered, called a synod against me, and in this were chiefly active my two ancient calumniators, Albericus and Lotulphus; who, their masters and ours,—William and Anselm,—being dead, thought to reign alone, and to succeed them as heirs. When both these persons ruled over the schools at Rheims, by their frequent suggestions they excited Rodolph the Archbishop against me; so that associating with himself Conan, bishop of Præneste who then had the office of legate in Gaul

they brought together an assemblage which they called a council, at Soissons ; and invited me to carry thither, and explain the treatise I had written on the Trinity. And it was so. Before, however, I arrived there, my two before-said rivals had so defamed me, both to the clergy and people, that on the day we arrived, I, and the few disciples who were with me, were nearly stoned by the multitude ; who said that I had by my writings and otherwise preached three Gods : for so they had been taught to believe.

“ As soon as I arrived I went to the legate, and carried him my treatise, that he might read and judge of it ; professing myself ready to receive correction and make satisfaction, if I had written any thing there which differed from the Catholic faith ; but he immediately ordered me to carry my book to the Archbishop, and my before-mentioned rivals, that those who had accused me might form a judgment of it ; thus was fulfilled in me what is written — ‘ my enemies are my judges.’ They, after turning over and considering the book very often, and not finding any thing that they dared bring against me, put off to the end of the Council the condemnation of the book which they were so desirous to effect.

“ This being the case, some days before the council commenced its sittings, I discussed publicly to all, what I had written with regard to the catholic faith ; and all who heard me commended, with great expressions of admiration, both the matter and manner of my discourse. Which, when the people and clergy saw, they began to say in turn to each other, ‘ See he speaks openly now, and no one says a word against him ; and the Council is coming to an end, which we had heard was called together in order to censure him. Have the judges then discovered that they are in error rather than he ? ’ And thus, from day to day, my rivals were more inflamed with jealousy.

“ One day, Albericus coming to me with some of his disciples, in order to try me ; after some apparently friendly conversation, said that he wondered at one thing which he saw asserted in the book ; namely this, that when God had generated God, and there being but one God, I should deny that God generated himself. To which I immediately replied, ‘ If you wish it I will give my reasons for saying what I have done.’ ‘ We do not care,’ said he, ‘ for human reason, or our own senses in these matters, but for the words of authority alone.’ To this I

answered, ' Turn over the leaf of the book, and you will find the authority.' The book was at hand, for he had brought it with him, and I turned to the place, which I remembered, and which he had not found, or had sought out only for my injury. It was the will of God that the passage I wanted was quickly found : it was a sentence entitled, *Augustinus de Trinitate lib. i.* and is as follows :—' He who thinks that God generated himself by his own power, errs greatly in this, because not only is it not so with regard to God, but neither is it the case with either spiritual or corporeal things, for there is nothing whatever that generates itself.' Which when his disciples who were present, heard, — they were astonished and coloured ; but he, that he might not seem discomfited, answered, ' It is well said, and intelligible' — I answered that this was no new thing, but that it had nothing to do with the matter in hand, since he required words only, not sense ; but if he chose to attend to sense and reason, I was prepared to show him that by his own sentence he had fallen into the heresy of those who maintain that he who is Father, is the son of himself ; which he, hearing, immediately became almost frantic, and began to utter threats that neither my argu-

ments nor my authorities would aid me in this matter; and so he departed.

“ The last day of the council, before they had sitten long; the legate and the Archbishop, with my rivals, and some other persons, began to deliberate what they should decide respecting me and my book; on which account they had been chiefly called together. And because neither in my words nor writings could they find anything of what they pretended, all having been silent for some little time, or at any rate less openly calumniating me, Geoffrey, bishop of Chartres, rose: he much exceeded the other bishops both in his reputation for piety, and the dignity of his see, and he thus spoke.

“ ‘ You all know, my lords here assembled, the character of this man, whatever it may be; and that his acuteness in all that he studies has gained him many disciples and followers; so that he has narrowed the fame as much of his masters as of ours, and his vine has extended its branches almost from sea to sea. If I prejudge him, which I do not think to do, it will be a matter of grave import, since you know many will be justly offended; and there will not be wanting those who will take up his defence, especially since we find nothing to blame in this present writing

Take care therefore that you do not add to his fame by acting violently : lest we may appear to complain of him more from envy than from a love of justice. For a false rumour as the before mentioned Doctor (Jerome) observes, is soon checked, and the after life is the best guide in judging of what went before. If therefore you determine to act canonically, let his dogma or writing be publicly recited in the midst of us, and allow him, on being interrogated, to reply freely, that either being convicted, or confessing his error, he may be silenced. For with regard to him we may use the speech of the blessed Nicodemus when he wished to liberate the Lord, i. e. ‘ our law judges no man unless he be first heard, and what he has done be known.’ Which speech having been heard, immediately my enemies exclaimed loudly, saying, ‘ Oh ! wise counsel ! that we are to contend with him in words whose arguments and sophisms the whole world cannot withstand !’ Yet surely it was much more difficult to contend with Christ himself, for whom nevertheless Nicodemus, according to the authority of the law, required a hearing.

“ When the bishop saw that he could not bring them to agree in what he proposed, he attempted another way of bridling their hatred ; saying that

the few persons present were not sufficient to decide on a matter of such moment, and that it required a further examination. In this last case his counsel would be different; namely that I should return with my Abbot who was present, to the monastery of Saint Denys, of which community I was a member, and there, more, and more learned persons being convoked, a more diligent examination should be made as to what was proper to be done in this case.

“ The legate assented to this last counsel, and all the others did the same. Presently after, he rose to say mass before he entered the council, and sent me a license by the above-mentioned bishop, to return to my monastery, there to await what should be decreed in the business. Then my rivals, not thinking they had done anything if they suffered the affair to be taken out of the diocese, for elsewhere they would have had less influence, persuaded the archbishop that it would be a great dishonour to him if this cause were transferred to any other tribunal; and that it would be very dangerous if I thus escaped; and thereupon all running together to the legate, they contrived to induce him to change his opinion, and drew him unwillingly, into condemning the book without any examination; decreeing

that it should be burnt publicly, and that I should suffer perpetual imprisonment in some monastery where I was a stranger. They said it was quite sufficient for the condemnation of the book that I had presumed to read it publicly, and give it to be transcribed, without having obtained the approbation and authority either of the Roman Pontiff, or of the Church ; and that it would be most useful to the christian faith in future, if, by my example, others might be deterred from a like presumption. And because the Legate was somewhat less learned than for such a station was necessary, he was the more guided by the counsels of the archbishop ; as the archbishop, in his turn, was by those of the persons already mentioned. Which, when the bishop of Chartres knew, he immediately informed me of these machinations, and exhorted me earnestly to bear this treatment even yet more patiently, on account of its unjust violence, which would be apparent to all, and which would be, in the end, as disadvantageous to my enemies as it would be advantageous to me. Neither need I fear the imprisonment in a monastery, the Legate himself, who was forced to do this, knowing very well that in a few days after he was gone I should be liberated : and thus as far as he was

able, shedding tears himself, he consoled me, also weeping.

“ I was therefore immediately called into the Council, and without any examination by discussion, they compelled my own hand to cast the before-mentioned book into the fire, and it was thus burnt; but when nothing was said on the subject, one of my adversaries whispered that he had perceived an assertion in the book that God the Father only is omnipotent. Which thing when the Legate heard, he replied with much astonishment, that he could not believe of a boy even, that he could err so far as that; ‘for,’ said he, ‘the common faith, both held and professed, is that there are three Omnipotents.’ This being heard by a certain schoolmaster, named Tetricus, he laughingly quoted the creed of St. Athanasius, which says, ‘and yet not three Omnipotents, but one Omnipotent:’—and when his bishop began to blame and reprove him as if he were a criminal who spoke treason, he boldly resisted, and, as if repeating the words of Daniel,* said, “Lo, foolish sons of Israel, ye, not judging or knowing what is the truth, have condemned a son of Israel. Return to the judgment seat

* In the apocryphal chapters.

and judge the judge whom you placed there for the purpose of giving instruction in the faith, and correcting error : and who, when he ought to have given a just sentence, condemned himself with his own mouth. The divine mercy has this day openly absolved the innocent, as it did Susanna from her false accusers of old.' Then the archbishop, rising, confirmed in other words, as was proper, the sentence of the Legate, ' In fact, my lord,' said he, ' the Father is Omnipotent, the Son Omnipotent, and the Holy Ghost Omnipotent, and any one who differs from this is plainly in error, and ought not to be heard. And now, if it please you, let this our brother make known his faith before us all, that, as is proper, it may be either approved, or disapproved and corrected.' But when I rose in order to confess and explain my faith, and was about to express in proper words what I felt, my adversaries exclaimed that nothing more was necessary than that I should repeat the creed of St. Athanasius, which every child could do. And that I might not have the excuse of not recollecting the words, they ordered a copy to be brought. I read as well as I could, amid sighs, sobs, and tears ; after which I was handed over, like a criminal, to the Abbot of St. Medard, who was present, and was led to the cloister as to a prison."

The council was dissolved immediately, and Abelard remained incarcerated for some days; after which, the Legate being publicly blamed for what he had done, sent him back to his own convent; "where," he says, "I had as much vexation from the inmates as ever: for they knew that I must be aware of their ill lives and impudent conversation, and would not bear to hear these things blamed. But a few months had elapsed when fortune offered them an occasion which they endeavoured to use for my destruction. It happened that one day, in reading, I came upon a passage in Bede's Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles, in which he asserts that Dionysius the Areopagite was bishop of Corinth rather than of Athens. This was very contrary to the notions of the Monks, who boasted that their Dionysius was the Areopagite; but in his acts, preserved by them, he is said to have been bishop of Athens. When I found this therefore, I showed it laughingly, — namely Bede's testimony against us, — to some of the friars who were standing round. They, much incensed, declared Bede to be a most lying writer, and said that they had the true testimony of their own Abbot Huldo; who had travelled long in Greece in order to clear up this point, and who

having given the truth of the matter in the acts of the Saint written by him, had thus removed all doubt. One of them having tormented me for a long time with questions as to whose testimony I was most inclined to receive, that of Bede or of Huldo? I replied that I preferred the authority of Bede, whose writings were commonly received in the Latin Church: upon which, being violently enraged, they began to clamour aloud, saying 'that I was now showing myself in my proper colours, and that I was always inimical to the monastery,' namely—by taking away the honour on which they so singularly prided themselves, —that of having the Areopagite for their patron. Whereupon I replied that I neither denied it, nor cared much whether it was the Areopagite or some other Dionysius, so long as he, whoever he was, had obtained the crown from God. They, however, all ran immediately to the Abbot, and reported to him what they had chosen to imagine I had said. He willingly listened to it, being well pleased to find an opportunity to overwhelm me; since, as he led even a worse life than the rest, he feared me the more. Hereupon he called his council together, and threatened me grievously before the assembled friars; saying that he should

hasten to send to the king that he might take vengeance upon me, seeing that I was endeavouring to take away the glory of his crown and kingdom: and commanded me in the mean time to look well to my ways, until he should send me to the king. In vain I offered to suffer the customary discipline, if it was found that I had offended against the monastic rule in any thing."

Finding that he was not likely to receive much justice even, at the hands of his enemies, Abelard took the earliest opportunity of making his escape into the territory of Theobald, Count of Champagne, and there entered a monastery of which the Prior was his old friend. One day the Abbot of St. Denys having on some occasion visited the Count, Abelard and his friend the Prior asked his intercession with the Abbot, that license might be allowed to the truant professor to remain unattached to any particular monastery. This however the Abbot sternly refused, and threatened to excommunicate both him, and all his friends; but happily for the persecuted Abelard, he died a few days after, and the desired license was at length obtained.

I will now give a few extracts from his theo-

logical works, which were condemned, because they were not understood. The following is from the Introduction to Theology, and is probably one of the parts which gave so much offence.

“ The Christian faith holds therefore, that there is only ONE GOD, and that there cannot by any means be a plurality of Gods:—that there is One Lord of All; One Creator; One Principle of being; One Light; One Good; One Infinite; One Omnipotent; One Eternal; One Substance or Essence completely unchangeable and simple; in which can be no parts, nor any thing which is not itself. The same faith teaches and believes the complete unity of this Essence, except in so far as pertains to the plurality of persons.* In this simple and individual substance then, our religion truly declares that there are three persons, in all things co-equal

* It must be remarked, in order to the better understanding of the passage, that a very common sense of *persona* in latin, is that of an individual sustaining some character, or of the mask worn by the actors of the ancient drama in that character; thus an actor takes various characters and is a different *persona* in each: Abelard considers the Divine Essence as shewing itself variously to mankind in the character of Immutable Self existence, Active benevolence, &c., &c.

and co-eternal ; and which are different, not as being different substantive things, but as the same thing having a plurality of properties — that is to say God the Father, as it is commonly expressed ; God its Son ; and God its Spirit, proceeding from both.

“ One of these persons is not the other, although the one is the same thing as the other ; nor is That which is the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit : nor is That which is the Son the Holy Spirit : nevertheless *what* the Father is, that also is the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and vice versâ. For the same God is as well Father as Son or Holy Spirit ; since they are altogether one in their nature, — one as well in number as in substance ; but in them the properties are so distinguished personally (characteristically) from each other, that the one differs from the other, although that other is not a different thing. The being is different personally, not substantially Thus Sedulius — ‘ Not because HE who is the Father is also the Son, but because THAT which is the Father is also the Son.’

“ It is the property of God to be unbegotten, that is, to exist of himself, not from another ; and in like manner it is the property of the Son to be derived from the Father, not to be created

or made; and it is the property of the Holy Spirit to proceed from both, not to be created or made: for that which has subsisted eternally and which has no beginning, cannot be said to be either created or made. Thus we say of the Father only that it is unbegotten, meaning that it has not a derived existence, but by nature subsists of itself, and not by means of any other"

The argument is carried on at some length, and with much perspicacity, to prove that the *persons* of the Trinity are the properties or active powers of the Deity. If the Self-Existing, having necessarily these properties in itself, they could not be without It. Thus the self-existing Deity is necessarily the Father; and the Logos, or Wisdom necessarily the Son, as having a being derived from the Deity, of which that wisdom is a necessary part. He insists much on the Greek meaning of Logos, as being the expression of an operation of the mind, and not of the mouth; this last being properly the voice. "And therefore" he adds "when we call the Logos the Son of God, that is the Word, we take it in that sense according to which λογος signifies, among the Greeks, the conception, or reasoning power of the mind, not

the giving out of the voice." . . . Thus power is attributed especially to the Father, and wisdom to the Son ; as also those things which pertain to the operations of divine grace, and the benignity of divine mercy we ascribe to the Holy Spirit ; such as remission of sins, and all distribution of divine gifts, which proceed solely from his goodness, not from any merit of our own : such as regeneration in baptism for the purpose of doing away with sin ; confirmation by the imposition of the bishop's hands, for the arming of the soul with virtue, &c. . . . Wherefore," he concludes, in his exposition of the Athanasian creed, " when it is said, plurally, *persons*, a diversity of properties is shown, not a number of things, or an essential difference (i.e. a difference in individual essentia, or being)."

The heads of the heretical errors imputed to Abelard, are still to be seen in the works of St. Bernard, concluded by the following words, " These are the heads of Peter Abelard's theology, or rather stultology." They are not very fairly stated ; for the charges are founded on garbled extracts, and of this Abelard is said to have complained. His opinions with regard to the Trinity are given above : they differ no fur-

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the most part substituted for argument: it was then, and for a long time after, one of the main weapons of controversy; but is very little satisfactory to any but the combatants. The other errors imputed to Abelard, were,

That he asserted "that the true reason and cause of the incarnation was, that the world might be illuminated by the light of His (God's) wisdom, and be warmed with love towards Him."

That "though Christ was God and man, yet the man Jesus was not one of the persons of the Trinity."

That "God did no more for those who were saved, than for those who were not saved," i. e. he gave to all the share of grace requisite to enable them to choose the good: the rest was optional on their part.

That "God was not called upon by the rules of justice or benevolence to prevent evil, which was voluntary on the part of man."

That "we contracted no sin from Adam, though in some things we suffer the consequences of his sin."

That "it is not the body of the Lord which falls when the consecrated elements by accident are thrown down."

That "man is not to be considered better or

worse according to his actions, but according to the motive and animus with which those actions are done."

That "those did not sin who crucified Christ ignorantly, and that, generally, nothing that is done in ignorance can be considered as sin."

That "the power of binding and loosing was given to the Apostles only, and not to their successors."

That "the suggestion of sin, nay, the involuntary pleasure produced by the suggestion, is not sin to the person receiving it, until the consent of the will is superadded."

* * The reader will doubtless see in these condemned "Errors," the germ of that reformation which the strenuous efforts of St. Bernard and others, delayed for two or three centuries, but could not prevent. Bernard, himself, indeed was not slack in seeing the moral stain which overspread the face of society; and in his letters and treatises he laments sufficiently the decay of christian graces: but it is seldom that the men of the time perceive clearly whence the evils which afflict them proceed, and the few whose views are correct, are generally derided as enthusiasts, or put down by force, as persons dangerous to the established order of things, which

includes so many vested interests, that almost all have a concern in supporting it. It was therefore long ere it was discovered that the multiplication of religious vows at variance with the laws of nature, was one of the chief causes of the very corruption which was so much complained of: accordingly with a view to its reform, new monasteries were built every year, and severer rules instituted, which had no other effect than that of disgusting men with religion altogether; since its yoke, if it were needful thus to bear it, was too heavy for human shoulders. Those whose interests made them conservatives in ecclesiastical matters, shrunk from enquiry; the enquirers were summarily burnt instead of answered; fresh monasteries were founded; fresh ceremonies instituted; fresh severities of rule invented, and—evaded; and earnest and misjudging men, like St. Bernard, thought that every thing must soon be right. Laics, however, began to see with different eyes, and when Luther began his preaching he found men's minds not unprepared for his doctrines. This, however, is not our concern here: I have promised my readers a view of the state of manners resulting from the religious doctrines and preaching of the twelfth century; and I proceed with my task.

I shall first bring forward St. Bernard as an unexceptionable witness.

BERNARD TO ROBERT HIS NEPHEW,

*Who had changed from the Cistercian order
to that of Clugni.**

“ I HAVE sustained enough, and more than enough, my most dear son Robert, in the hope that perhaps the tenderness of God towards his creatures might induce him, for your sake and mine, to visit your soul ; inspiring you with a salutary compunction, and me with joy at your salvation. But since thus far I have been deceived in my expectation, I can no longer conceal my grief, repress my anxiety, or dissemble my sadness. Hence, contrary to the order of all law, I, being hurt, try to recall him who has hurt me ; being contemned, seek again him who despises me, having suffered injury, endeavour to satisfy him who has injured me ; and lastly, entreat him who ought to entreat me. But excessive grief does not deliberate, is ashamed of

* The abandonment of one order for another was a high offence ; and the offender, if taken, was not unfrequently severely punished.

nothing, does not consult reason, does not fear the loss of dignity, does not obey any law, does not acquiesce in any decision of the judgment, knows neither measure nor order, and thinks only of getting rid of what it suffers from, or obtaining what it needs. But you will say 'I have neither hurt nor despised any one; it was rather I who was despised and injured in a variety of ways, and I only fled from my tormentors. What harm have I done if I only fly from injury? Is it not better to give place to persecutors than to resist them? to fly from him who wounds me than to return the blow?'—Thou art right: I did not write this to dispute with thee . . . I will not enquire what has been done, or why . . . I do not ask why you have gone away, but I lament that you do not return. Only come, and all will be peace again;—return, and the whole matter shall be set at rest.

“It was my fault that you went away; I was too austere with a young man brought up delicately: I treated a tender youth with harshness and inhumanity. This, I remember you were accustomed to complain of; and this, as I hear, you still do. I do not blame you now for this; I might perhaps excuse myself, and say that the fancies of so wanton a youth ought to be co-

erced, and that a rough discipline should form and guide the beginning of its course, as the Scripture testifies, 'Strike thy son with the rod, so shalt thou save his soul from death,' &c.

He goes on to invite his nephew's return, by promises that this severity shall not again be enforced against him; but he thinks that other motives also had prevailed in the young man's mind.—He thus continues,

"In the first place, some great Prior was sent by the chief of the Priors himself, outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly a ravening wolf. The guards were deceived, thinking him a sheep: alas! alas! the wolf was admitted into the fold to the lamb, and the lamb did not fly from him, thinking him a sheep. What further? he allured, cajoled, flattered;—and this new preacher of the gospel commended feasting and condemned parsimony; he called voluntary poverty, wretchedness;—fasting, vigils, silence, manual labour, he called insanity: on the contrary he called idleness by the name of contemplation;—gluttony, loquacity, curiosity, and every other intemperance he called discretion. 'When,' said he, 'was God ever pleased by our sufferings?—Where does the Scripture command us to kill ourselves with hardships? What

religion is there in digging the earth, cutting down woods, or spreading manure?—Is it not written in the word of truth ‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice,’—and ‘I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.’—Why did God create various kinds of food if we are not to eat them? Why did he give us a body if he prohibits our nourishing it? Lastly, if we are harsh to ourselves, to whom shall we not be harsh? What wise man ever hated his own flesh?’

“Seduced by such reasoning the unfortunate youth is led away, and follows his seducer: he is taken to Clugni. There his hair is cut, he is shaved,—washed:—he left us in rustic, old, dirty clothing; he is clothed afresh in costly dress, clean and new, and then he is received into the convent; but guess with how much honour, with what kind of triumph, with how much reverence?—He is placed above all his contemporaries, and the sinner, indulging his carnal desires, is praised like a victor returning from the battle. He is set on the high dais in pomp, so that a boy is placed above his seniors: the whole fraternity addresses, flatters, congratulates him; and all exult over their prey like victors dividing the spoil. O blessed Jesus! how much

is done for the perdition of one poor soul!— who would not be moved to grief by such a sight, however hard his heart? whose mind, however spiritualized, would not be troubled?—

“In the mean time a decision in his favour is solicited from Rome; and that the Pope may not deny his assent, it is suggested to him that the youth was taken from his parents to the monastery while yet an infant. There was no one to contradict this; they did not wait, indeed, for a contradiction, and an *ex parte* judgment was given, the parties not being present. Those who did the injury were justified, those who had suffered it were sent out of court, and the criminal was absolved, and further confirmed in his cruel privilege by the too gentle sentence of absolution; which, being known, served to strengthen the resolution of the vacillating youth, and give assurance to him who yet doubted. And this was the tenor of the letters, and the definition of the whole cause; that they who had seized should keep, and they who had lost should be silent; and, amid all these things, a soul perishes for which Christ died! and this merely because the monks of Clugni will have it so.

“ Let HIM come, let HIM come who will re-

judge what is ill-judged here ; who will confound oaths unlawfully taken, who will do justice to those who have suffered injury, who with righteousness will judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. . . . Let it come, I say, that day of judgment, when a pure heart will be worth more than cunning words ; and a good conscience, than a full purse ; since that Judge will neither be deceived by words, nor corrupted by gifts. To thy tribunal, Lord Jesus, I appeal ; for thy judgment I reserve my self ; to thee I commit my cause, Lord God of Sabaoth who judgest rightly !—” . . .

* * It appears that the youth had been originally promised by his parents to the monastery of Clugni, but when older, and, as Bernard says “ able to judge for himself,” he petitioned to be received among the Cistertians. Both followed the Benedictine rule, but it had at this time become much relaxed among the monks of Clugni, while the Cistertians maintained a much greater regularity of manners ; and kept up an outward sanctity not seen in the others. The two orders were, in consequence, jealous of each other : the monks of Clugni accused the Cistertians of needless and extravagant austerity ; while the Cistertians with equal reason, accused the others

of having greatly degenerated from their former holiness. The disputes between them were carried to such a point, that St. Bernard who was abbot of Clairvaux, a Cistercian monastery, thought it needful to write what he calls an apology on the subject: namely, a justification of his own conduct, addressed to the Abbot of St. Theoderic.

“Who” says he in this apology “ever heard me speaking against the order (of Clugni) either publicly or privately? Whom of this order did I ever treat otherwise than with respect, or admonish, but in the spirit of humility? . . . Whom did I ever dissuade from entering it, or tempt to enter mine?—Have I not rather repulsed many who wished to come? and did I not, as you know, send back to you two of your monks who had fled to me?—”

He goes on to give them praise for their care of the sick, and other works of charity, and reproves those of his own order who condemned them; telling these that the difference of orders should not prevent Christian fellowship between them.

“What have you to do,” says he, “with the servants of others? to their own master they stand or fall. Who made you judges over them?”

—And furthermore, if, as is reported, you presume upon your order, why do you not first cast out the beam that is in your own eyes, ere you seek so curiously for the mote that is in your brethren's? . . . It is said, 'how can they keep the rule who wear furs; who, even while in health, eat flesh, or the fat of it? Who allow pottage three or four times in one day, which the rule forbids?—Who do not labour with their hands, which that rule requires, and do much that is not permitted, or neglect much that is commanded? This is true enough, but there is also God's rule, from which that of St. Benedict does not differ; and that says 'the kingdom of God is within you;' that is, not exteriorly in raiment, or in nourishment of the body, but in the interior virtues of the man."

He then proceeds to give a picture of the state of monasteries in his time, which, as he is not likely to exaggerate in this case, is probably to be depended on.

"It is said, and constantly believed," says he, "that this mode of life was instituted by the holy fathers; and in order that more might thus be saved, the rigour of the discipline might be tempered to the infirm, though by no means wholly laid aside. Far be it from me to believe

that all the vanities and superfluities which I see in most monasteries are either commanded or conceded by that indulgence. I am unable to comprehend how so much intemperance in meats and drinks; in clothing and bedding;—in horses and buildings, could ever find its way among monks, so that when these things are pursued with the most pleasure and eagerness, then the order should be thought to be best observed, and religion the most cultivated . . . Now, behold parsimony is thought avarice, sobriety is named austerity, silence is held to be melancholy. On the contrary, carelessness is called discretion;—squandering, liberality;—loquacity, affability; cackling mirth is called cheerfulness;—softness of clothing and the pomp of horses, propriety;—the superfluous care of bedding, cleanliness. When we spend much upon any of these things it is called charity, but this charity destroys charity; this discretion confounds all discretion. The pity is cruelty which thus saves the body in order to destroy the soul . . . Some indeed use these things as not using them, and thus live with small, or no scandal: some do it through simplicity; some out of kindness; some from necessity. Some hold it to be right simply because they are told so;

prepared to act otherwise if otherwise commanded: some follow where they are led, not for their own pleasure, but for the sake of peace; that they may not live in a state of variance with their companions; and others because they are not able to resist the multitude of voices which defend the present state of things; for as often as they attempt to restrain or abolish any abuse, they are immediately resisted with the whole force of authority.—Who, when the monastic rule was first instituted, would have believed that the monks would arrive at such a pitch of idleness?—Oh! how different are these from the monks which existed in the time of St. Anthony! if any of these could re-visit the earth, we should find in them so much anxiety for the bread of the soul that, the body being wholly forgotten, they would remain the whole day without corporeal, and satisfied with spiritual food: and this was the right order, where the worthier part was served first Now there is no one who enquires after this celestial food, no one who supplies it. Nothing is said of the Scripture, nothing of the salvation of souls; but the conversation consists of trifles and mirth, and words given to the wind. At dinner, just as throats are opened for food, so are ears

open for news In the mean time one dish succeeds another, and in the room of flesh meats, from which alone they abstain, large fishes are served in double quantity. When you have satisfied yourself with the first, if you taste the second you will think you have as yet tasted nothing. Such is the art of the cooks who prepare them, that after having devoured four or five dishes, the first do not at all impede the appetite for the last. The palate, seduced by fresh condiments, by degrees loses the taste of the former, and with the new sauces renews its desire for more : the stomach in the mean time is loaded unknowingly, for the variety takes away the disgust To mention only one thing out of many ;—in how many ways are eggs worried and tormented !—with how much care are they turned inside out, beaten, made liquid, made hard, broken small, and served up, now fried, now roasted, now stuffed, now mixed, now singly !—Why all this pains but for the gratification of a fastidious appetite ?—Even the qualities of things are so managed that they shall delight the eye no less than the taste, and even when the stomach indicates its fulness by frequent eructations, curiosity is not yet satisfied. But while the eye is seduced by colours,

and the palate by tastes, the unfortunate stomach which sees no colours, and is pleased by no savours, is obliged to receive every thing, and, oppressed under the load, is injured rather than refreshed. Then what shall I say as to the drinking of water, when by no chance is it admitted even to be mixed with the wine? All we monks have infirm stomachs, and do not neglect the precept of the Apostle to use 'wine,' but the 'little' which he orders, somehow we forget. Would to heaven I could say that we were content with wine alone when it is pure: but I am ashamed to say you will see at dinner three or four cups carried away half full where various wines rather smelt of than tasted, rather touched than swallowed, are tried, and the strongest sagaciously and quickly chosen from among many When the vessels are gorged with the stimulus of wine, when the head is throbbing from the rush of blood, what are they fit for when they rise from table, but to sleep? If you call them up to vigils while suffering from indigestion, you would hear groans from them rather than songs.

“ When they go to their beds they complain of the incommidity, not because of the sin of the debauch, but because they are unable to eat.

One thing I think it right to mention which is ridiculous enough if indeed it be true, but which has been related to me by many who declare that they know it to be fact. It is said that healthy and strong young men are accustomed to quit the convent and enter the infirmaries, in order that by the eating of flesh meat, which is there allowed for the recovery of the sick, they may—not recover strength, but enjoy luxury . . . Shall we say that these things are to be laughed at, or wept over? Was it thus that Macarius lived? That Basil taught? Did Antonius leave such institutions? did the fathers in Egypt thus converse? . . .

“ For clothing, what is fine and costly, not what is useful is sought ;—not what will exclude cold, but what will nourish pride ; not, according to the rule ‘ what can be bought cheapest,’ but what will make the most handsome show But you will say, ‘ religion lies not in the habit, but in the heart ’—True ; but you, when you want to buy a fresh hood, search through whole towns ; traverse the market place ; run through fairs ; examine warehouses ; and turn over every thing ; trying it with your fingers, moving it before your eyes, placing it in the sun ;—Is there any thing amiss in its colour or fineness,

you reject it; if, on the contrary, any thing pleases you by its colour and texture, you immediately take care to have it at whatever price I ask, is this done intentionally, or in mere simplicity? When, against the rule, you seek, not what is cheapest, but what is most costly, is this done ignorantly? . . .

“ What sort of humility is it,—I will be silent on other points,—to travel with such pomp and retinue? to be attended by so many long haired men? * so that an abbot requires as many attendants as two bishops. I protest I have seen an abbot with sixty horses and men in his train. You would say if you saw them pass, these are not fathers of monasteries, but lords of castles; not governors of souls, but of provinces Then they require to be carried so many napkins, goblets, basins, candelabra, and wallets stuffed full, not merely of the covering, but of the ornaments of the beds. Hardly will they go four leagues from their home without their whole house furniture, as if they were going to join the army, or pass through a desert where nothing needful could be found. Cannot water

* Long hair hanging down on the shoulders was held a luxury in those times.

be poured on the hands and wine drunk from the same vessel? Is there no light to be had from a candle unless it be carried in a candlestick, and that of silver or gold? Cannot we sleep excepting on various mattresses, and under a travelling canopy? Cannot one servant tie up the horse, and serve the table, and prepare the bed?—But now we travel with such numbers of men and horses, that if we do not carry with us what is needful, and thus lessen the evil, we become an insupportable burthen to our hosts.

“ But these things are trifles,—I come now to matters of more, though, from being common, they may seem of less import. I will pass over the immense height of your oratories, their immoderate length, their useless breadth, their sumptuous polishings, their curious paintings, which attract the eyes even during prayer, draw away the feelings, and seem to me to represent the ancient rites of Judaism. But be it so, these things are done for the honour of God But tell me, you who call yourselves poor, what have you to do with gold? . . . We know that they who have to do with the devotion of the carnal people who are incapable of spiritual feeling, are obliged to excite their minds

by corporeal ornaments : but we who have gone out from the people, who have left for Christ's sake whatever the world had of precious and splendid, who are bound to contemn, as dung, all that delights the eye, that pleases the ear, that is sweet to the smell, to the taste, or the touch, in fine, every bodily satisfaction, in order to devote ourselves wholly to Him ;—whose devotion do we intend to excite ? what fruit do we look for ? . . . To speak plainly . . . is not this expense so contrived as to pay itself ? . . . for the sight of all this sumptuousness warns men rather to bring gifts than to offer up prayers The beautiful form of the saint is shewn, and is thought the holier from the brightness of the colouring : the people hurry to kiss it, they are invited to give, and admiration of what is magnificent takes the place of veneration for what is holy We see in the place of candelabra certain trees fabricated with marvellous art, and of great value ; not more brilliant from the lights they support, than from the gems which ornament them . . . Oh vanity of vanities, and not more vain than insensate ! —The walls of the church are enriched with gems, but there are no poor there. Its stones are covered with gold, but its children are

naked. The eyes of the rich are gratified at the expense of the poor* . . . Wherefore do we

* The following extract from the lives of the Abbots of St. Albans will give some notion of the useless waste of revenue which St. Bernard here reproveth.

“ The Abbot Geoffrey ordained that the festivals of our Lord’s Ascension, of the blessed Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, and of the blessed John Lateran should be held chief festivals: and that those of the blessed Giles, of the conception of the blessed Virgin, and of the blessed Katharine should be celebrated in holy-day hoods, in honour of God and the Saints. And he made seven hoods whereof one was entirely covered with gold and precious stones, and another was prepared with precious tassels,* gold, and pearls, both in front and on the border all round. Other four there were, admirable for their gold embroidery; the seventh was of purple, handsomely ornamented with tassels. Also five cloaks, whereof one was all of gold, that is to say, it contained six marks and a half, besides a very broad and most precious gold embroidery, the same beneath, and before, and behind; also it was finished with precious gems and tassels, the cloth shining with brilliant red. After this Abbot’s death, and in the time of Ralph his successor, by the base cupidity of some covetous persons, this was burnt, in order to melt the gold wherewith it was said to be too much loaded. There were others of the choicest gold embroidery, and two without embroidery, but decorated with tassels of equal value. An Orarium (a

* So I interpret *Tassellis*, which I do not find in any glossary.

not at least revere the effigies of the saints with which the very pavement which we tread upon

kind of scarf) *cum Farrone** ornamented with gold and jewels. A Dalmatic (a sort of tunic) which was entirely covered with gold. A tunic bordered in like manner with gold; also three Albs ornamented with gold, and gold embroidery; and silk embroidery wrought with the needle. Also a cup with a plate of gold, worth eight marks, which the Abbot Geoffrey himself afterwards sent to Rome, to satisfy the avarice of Pope Celestine, who was wishing to appropriate this church to himself. Also a table of gold, and silver, and rare gems, cunningly constructed of the length and breadth of the altar of St. Alban, which, at last, in great necessity, the same Abbot melted in the fire, and reduced to one lump; the which he gave to the Earl of Warrenne, William of Ypres, the Earl of Arundell, and William Martell, in King Stephen's time, when they threatened to set fire to the town; and it was thus that the said Abbot, having pity on the afflicted people, assuaged the fury of the before-said leaders. For now the piety of the ancients being quite thrust out of doors, the injustice of the foreigners roamed at will. He made also a censer of silver, and an incense box of silver, both however were gilt; and he gave to the church three silver vases, and one of crystal, candlesticks of silver gilt, and one receptacle of silver, in which were placed the relics following, namely, of Bartholomew the Apostle, and the martyrs Ignatius, Laurentius, and Nigasius. He made also one missal bound in gold, and

* This word is unknown to me, and not to be found in any of the glossaries I have consulted.

is overflowing. Often the face of an angel is spitten upon, or that of a saint worn away with the feet of those who pass and repass over it . . . What business have those ridiculous monstrosities in the cloisters where the friars are reading . . . Why those unclean monkeys? those fierce lions? those monstrous centaurs? those half men? those spotted tigers? those fighting warriors? those horn blowing hunters?—You may there see many bodies joined under one head, and again many heads on one body: here, you will perceive a quadruped with the tail of a serpent; there, the head of a quadruped joined to a fish's body . . . In fine, there are so many and such a variety of forms every where to be seen, that it is pleasanter to read the marbles than books, and the day is spent rather in looking at them, than in meditating on the law of the Lord. Good God! if none are ashamed of the folly, is not the expense enough to deter?" . . .

* * The attempt to reform any of these practices was neither easy nor always safe. The following letter from Thurstin, Archbishop of

another in two volumes, all incomparably illuminated with gold, and clearly and legibly written," &c., &c. *Vitæ viginti trium Scti. Albani Abbatum.* p. 40.

York, written about A. D. 1192, will give some notion of the state of things.

“ Thurstin, by the grace of God, Archbishop of York, wishes, in all christian charity, for the most reverend lord William, by the same grace Archbishop of Canterbury, and legate of the Apostolic See, that he may go forward in Christ, and never fall from him.

“ The highest honour which ecclesiastical dignity can receive is, to be called on to communicate advice to the sons, and principal persons of the church in difficult circumstances. Hence we have decided, most venerable lord and excellent father, to communicate to your paternal grace the extraordinary thing which has lately happened among us at York. It is well known to many in what excellent report in the ears of all, the most distinguished monastery of Saint Mary of York has been held: for in few years it greatly prospered in all things, and the number and devotion of the brethren abounded in a most laudable degree. But as, when riches increase, the virtues without doubt are wont to flourish less; so some of the brethren of this monastery, moved, if I mistake not, by a divine impulse, began, about half a year ago, to feel themselves violently agitated respecting the

state and manner of their life and conversation ; and their conscience thereupon reproaching them, as they themselves say, they were a prey to great mental grief. For they feared to be blameable, if, having taken on themselves such vows, they did not worthily follow them out. Hence the before said Eboracensian brethren were struck with inexpressible horror, when they thought they perceived that they either did not at all, or very imperfectly, comply with what by their vows they were bound to ; fearing that they might be despised and held of no account, or if not so already, would be, if they suffered those guilty of so much disobedience to remain unpunished : for it appeared to them a crime, or rather, a madness, to wear the habit and profess the rule of St. Benedict, not to their salvation, but their perdition.

“ Being moved by these things the aforesaid brethren sought by all means in their power to make known to their Prior, Richard by name, their state of mental distress ; and explaining their dread of transgressing, they supplicated his support in correcting the performance of their vow ; and adjured him by the love of Christ and the Spirit of God, that he would not be deterred from assisting them by any regard

whatever, either to adverse or prosperous results. He was startled at the novelty of the thing, but though enjoying among his friends the comforts of an easy life, yet having thus heard the report of a better, he cogitated deeply the various chances of uncertain fortune. In the mean time calling his own thoughts to a brief council on the occasion, and endeavouring to decide well between the two parties, he thus resolved. He promised not only his assistance, but that he would himself be an associate in their design : why should I prolong my narrative ?—very soon the number of these associates amounted to thirteen, all of whom had resolved on reforming their life according to the rule of St. Benedict, proposing to live thenceforth according to the truth of the gospel.

“ On the vigils, therefore, of the apostles Peter and Paul, our well beloved Richard the Prior, upon whom almost all the care of the monastery depended, taking as his assistant Ger-vase the sub-prior, undertook to explain quietly to the Lord Abbot the affair in hand between the nominal and the devout brethren. Upon which, the lord Abbot, a man indeed as to his disposition both upright and good, but altogether too simple and illiterate ; was struck with horror

at the news of this miracle, and denied that it was in his power to alter, in his small place, the ancient rites and customs, which were observed by multitudes nearly all over the world. But the lord Prior, being learned, replied, ' We do not ask any thing from you, O father, that is either new or hard. We only assume that we ought to obey with our utmost efforts the true and ancient religious vow of our blessed father Benedict, and yet more ancient gospel of Christ, which preceded all religious vows and rules. We say nothing against other monks; we do not envy them their institutions. We know that in every place we serve one Lord; we fight for one king, and whether in the forum or the cloister, the grace of God is the same. Job was stronger on his dunghill than Adam in Paradise. Lastly, whatever the blessed Benedict instituted was so determined by the providence of the Holy Spirit, that nothing more useful, nothing more holy, nothing more happy could be devised: and because he knew and preached that idleness is the enemy of the soul, he ordained certain times for reading and prayer,—and certain other times for labour and industry;—so that in one the soul should be healthfully exercised; in the other, the flesh;—so that both

might be prevented from feeling the weariness produced by want of occupation. To all which he added this command, 'Scurrility, or idle words moving laughter, we condemn in every place to eternal silence, and do not permit the disciple to open his lips in such speech—' and elsewhere he says, 'at all times the monks should study to be silent, but chiefly in the nocturnal hours. Whoever is acquainted with our habits will judge how diligently this ordinance is observed: for some go into the church after their meal, others retire in turn to partake of useless and trifling conversation: as if the evil of the day were not enough without adding to it that of the night.'

" He added much besides on their fastidiousness in food, of the pleasing and solemn exchange of drinks, and of the costly fineness of their clothes. 'Not thus did our blessed father Benedict think,' continued he, 'not thus did he teach. *He* did not think so much of the colour of the vestment as of its warmth; *he* did not enquire if the savouriness of the pottage was satisfactory, but whether there was food sufficient to support life. The blessed Benedict does not recognize us as his own, unless when living in common under their Abbot, in obedience to his rule: wherefore, if it be permitted, O vene-

rable father, we will recur to the evangelical purity, to the evangelical perfection and peace, and we will consider whether any thing, or how little of what Christ taught is at present to be found in our manners and actions. We all covet; we are choleric; we quarrel; we plunder others; we seek our own by lawsuits, we defend ourselves by fraud and lies; we follow the flesh and its lusts. We live for ourselves; we please ourselves; we fear to be vanquished; we glory in having conquered, we oppress others; we avoid being oppressed ourselves; — we envy others, we glory in our own prosperity; we jest and grow fat on the labour of others, and the whole world hardly suffices for our evil desires. And yet although the gospel seems dead in us, and altogether impracticable, we can see in the monks of Savigny and Clairvaux who lately visited us, how clearly the light of the gospel shines; and if it were allowable to say so, I should say it might be more useful to imitate them than to recite the gospels, since when we see their holy conversation we may almost imagine we see the gospel revived in them. They alone do not seek their own, they alone possess nothing about which they can contend with their neighbours: they alone do not desire to see the

damage of others. They are content with a moderate culture of the earth, and use of their flocks, and even then they do not desire to have these things longer than God pleases ; because if he pleased to take these things away, to wish for them would be to covet what is not theirs. They, if I mistake not, are able to say the world is crucified to us, and we to the world. They indeed can say, Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, who have no debtors from whom they mean to claim what is due. Happy the men who in habit, food, and all parts of their conversation, show forth the gospel: God is their portion alone. They may be considered, as far as that is in the power of any man, to be filled with the love of God and their neighbour. Therefore, O father, it cannot ever appear impossible to maintain the rule of the blessed Benedict ; since God has been pleased to afford us such instances of it in the persons of these men, who have gone before us in order that we might follow their example. If, indeed, we are not able entirely to attain to their purity on account of the vicinity and bustle of the people around us ; at least let us consider what is the manner of life imposed on us by the rules of our profession ; for at present we are not monks but dead men.'

“ After this manner spake my lord Richard the Prior to Geoffry his Abbot, respecting the correction of his monastery; which words the lord Abbot did not receive with much pleasure; for it is difficult to alter long habits. Howbeit, he professing himself not very clear of understanding, and somewhat illiterate, and wishing to have it set forth more clearly in writing how, in his position, such things could be done, the Prior willingly undertook, and did not idly execute the office thus confided to him. He wrote down therefore,—that no other clothes or viands, or conversation should be allowed than those that appeared to be allowed by the rule (of St. Benedict); and so diligently did he express what should be the order of things in the monastery, that the rule could scarcely have been better observed in a desert than it might thus have been here in the city. The possessions of the monastery,—as he was well versed in secular things,—he so arranged that nothing should exceed evangelical propriety. With respect to the revenues of the churches, and the tithes;—with regard to the investiture of which, the monks are wont to be most reprehensible, he required all to be received and done under the legitimate and canonical order and determi-

nation of the bishops, and not to be expended, save for the use of the poor, of pilgrims, and of strangers: but required that the monks themselves should be maintained by the legitimate culture of the earth, and use of their flocks: which things, when they began to be known by report among the others, excited the fury of the multitude to such a point of hatred, that they thought nothing fit for such a man and his supporters, unless it were exile or strict imprisonment.

“ Nevertheless, after many amicable discussions on this subject, the lord Abbot replied, that it was difficult for him to alter any thing that his predecessors appeared to have held right, and wishing to have good counsel thereupon, he put off giving a full reply till the nativity of the blessed Virgin.

“ Meanwhile the other brethren fearing that they should be compelled to a stricter observance of the rules of the order than they had hitherto practised; began, like the Pharisees, to feel an extreme hatred for the Prior; and had it not been for the respite afforded by the good humour of some, the domestic persecution would have exceeded all bounds. Meantime the report of internal dissension spread among the

multitude without. We heard the noise of the vulgar sort, but the truth of the matter was hidden, when behold Richard the Prior, along with the sub-prior and secretary of his monastery, took upon himself the care of informing us of the whole affair as it stood. They asked the compassion of the holy Peter, and ours, and entreated that I would not deny my benevolent assistance in the carrying out what they had vowed. They said that the necessity for it was now imminent, for that the friars had already conspired to cast out from communion with them any one who should murmur in any way in what regarded his profession. As for the companions of the Prior, they already drew back, induced thereto by fear, or affection, or vanity, but they were not again received into favour without confessing their fault in having whispered anything on the subject of observing their vows.

“ Therefore I, Thurstin, by the grace of God Archbishop of York, hearing that the servants of Christ, according to the precept of the blessed Benedict, refused to place any thing in competition with the love of Christ — feared lest I should offend against the divine grace in them if I did not extend my episcopal compassion to their just petition ; since one of the especial du-

ties of my office is to provide for the quiet life of the monks, and to sympathize with the oppressed in their necessity. And thereafter, having taken the counsel of other religious persons, I cited Geoffry the lord Abbot, and Richard the Prior, with his sub-prior, to a more convenient place, where I would hear and bring to a peaceable conclusion the petition of the religious persons and friars, and receive the reply of the Abbot. They, as at first, with many tears asked nothing but that they might be allowed to follow Christ, who had himself been poor, in voluntary poverty; bearing the cross of Christ in the body; and likewise that they should not be hindered from fully observing the evangelical peace and rule of the blessed Benedict. For this they asked the license and paternal assistance of the lord Abbot. The lord Abbot, on his part, confessed, weeping, that this work was greatly needed, and promised that he would not impede their wish, seeing that it was an holy one: but that the assistance they requested he could not promise without the knowledge of the chapter.

“ Thus the lord Abbot and his monks returned home; peace being made in the mean time, and a day appointed when I should come to a meeting of the chapter, and with other re-

ligious persons deliberate on the affair with the Abbot. Meanwhile the other friars were so much the more violent in their hatred, in proportion as these were eager to fulfil their vow. They called in the friars of the greater monastery, and the monks of Clugni who were staying in the neighbourhood, and they being present and consenting by acclamation, they degraded the aforesaid persons from every dignity and charge in the monastery, as deserters and violators of the common order; for, after the Abbot, the whole charge of the monastery was in their hands. But these things by the by. I, on the day appointed prepared myself early in the morning to attend the Chapter of monks: and now I had almost set my foot on the threshold, along with several learned and religious men whose names are as follows. Hugo, the Dean; — William, Prior of the regular clergy at Cisbarne; William, the Treasurer; Hugo, the archdeacon; Serlo, a canon; Alfred, a canon and my chaplain; Robert, the priest of the hospital:—our horses remained in the court within the gates, with a few men to look after them.

“ Finally, we entering, as has been said already, the door of the Chapter House, were met in the doorway by the lord Abbot and his

monks, of whom the chapter was full; who refused to let me enter unless I sent away a part of the clergy who were with me. I had hardly time to answer that I ought not to make such a proposal to my clergy, who were both learned and good men, and also their friends, when behold! the whole chapter resounded with such noise and tumult, that it seemed rather the fury of a set of frantic drunkards, than the humble demeanour of monks: of humility indeed there was no appearance. Many rose, and ran forward, throwing out their arms as if prepared for a personal struggle, crying aloud that they would leave the place if I entered. Upon which I said, 'God is my witness that I came hither as a father, with no intention of working any ill to you; merely wishing to see peace among you, and christian brotherhood. But now that you endeavour to take from me my episcopal authority and office, I, in my turn, take from you what you need. I interdict you the service of the church.'—Then said one of them, by name Simeon, 'We should like the interdict to be continued for an hundred years—' to which all assenting with frenetical outcries, 'Seize, seize them,' they exclaimed; and thereupon laying hands on the Prior and his companions, they

began to drag them away: being minded, as they had before determined, either to throw them into prison, or force them into exile. They, on their part, having no other hope of escaping from the hands of their enemies, embraced me in their arms, claiming the blessed Peter's protection and mine: and then we with difficulty returned to the church, and were even then followed by them, exclaiming 'Seize the rebels, apprehend the traitors.'—We seated ourselves therefore in the church, and the Abbot and his monks returned to the Chapter House.

“ Meantime, the men of the Abbey having closed the gates and entrances, stood sentries as against some danger. Then we,—to confess the truth,—fearing an attack from the monks, took care to bar the doors of the church within, which opened into the cloisters. Meanwhile the report of what was going on was spread abroad, and the people gathered round: but without the gates nothing of evil was either said or done. When therefore no peace could be made among the monks, we returned home; taking with us the before-mentioned persons; in number twelve priests and one sub-deacon; of whom many were well learned; all were zealous in the full observance of the discipline of their order; and equally careful in the duties of their profession

and of the gospel. Therefore they were all lodged in the house of the blessed Peter, and ours; all opposition and violence notwithstanding. The friars not the less raged in their usual fashion; what part the Abbot thought fit to take, I know not.

“ Wherefore I earnestly pray your fatherly goodness, for Christ’s sake, to defend by your authority the cause of those who are anxious to go forward to a severer and stricter discipline. If their Abbot should come to you, by the authority and wisdom which God has given you, admonish him not to impede the holy intentions of his children. If he has been with you already, and is gone, then we pray that by the present messenger you will direct to him letters of exhortation, that he may not pertinaciously oppose, but rather afford assistance and opportunity to such as wish truly to obey the gospel of Christ, and the discipline of the blessed Benedict.—” *

* * Geoffry, the Abbot, applied to Bernard

* Those who may wish to know more of monastic life and doings, would do well to possess themselves of the *Chronicles of Jocelyn of Brakelond*, a monk of St. Edmundsbury, first published by the Camden Society, but now translated, and to be had of Messrs. Whitaker & Co. Ave Maria Lane, at the easy cost of two shillings.

for advice, as appears from the reply published among his letters; but the Abbot of Clairvaux was too earnest in his views of monastic vows, to give him any encouragement in his love of an easy life. He did not however revoke his censure of Richard the Prior and his companions, and the Archbishop of York finding him inexorable, after keeping the protesting monks in his own house for some time, gave them a piece of uncultivated ground near Rippon, where they established a new monastery, of which Richard was ordained Abbot: it was known afterwards as Fountains Abbey. They adopted the Cistercian rule.

At this time the Cloister was considered as the only place where religion was, or could be thought of; and from all we read of the oppression and licentiousness of the great, and the barbarism of the lower people, we cannot much wonder that the notion should have become prevalent. In the enumeration of the treasures of the Abbey of St. Albans we find that a large quantity of rich vestments and other ornaments were melted down for the gold, in the reign of Stephen, in order to buy off the Earl of Warrenne, William of Ipres, the Earl of Arundel and William Martell who had threatened to

burn the place. The list shows that it was not without reason that St. Bernard complained that what should have been given to the poor, was wasted in vain splendour : but it also shows to what violence these religious houses were exposed, even though every traveller, according to his degree, found hospitable entertainment there ; a circumstance which made it the interest of all to prevent them from being destroyed.

But though unable to contend against armed violence, the monastic orders in their turn, won back the spoil from the superstitious fears of their plunderers. Nor did the ecclesiastics of those days avail themselves of their spiritual weapons merely for their own defence : the cause of the poor, and of the oppressed was sometimes pleaded by them with a noble earnestness. The following letter from St. Bernard to Conrad, duke of Zeringen, shows the boldness of a man thoroughly in earnest, though at the same time conscious of the potent spell which he had in his hands.

“ All power is from him to whom the prophet exclaims ‘ Thine is the power, thine the kingdom, O Lord, — thou art above all peoples’ — Hence I have judged it proper, O illustrious

prince, to admonish your excellency how much you ought to humble yourself before that terrible power which can take away the spirit of princes.

“ The Count of Cevennes, as I have learned from his own lips, has given himself up to justice, and offers to meet all charges which you have against him. If after this, you go on to invade a land not your own; to destroy churches; burn houses; drive out the poor; perpetrate homicide, and shed human blood, doubt not but that you will excite the wrath of Him who is the Father of the Orphan, and the Judge of the Widow: and against his wrath neither numbers nor courage will avail. For it matters not to the omnipotent Lord of Hosts whether there be few or many on the side to which he wills the victory. What he wills, he does; and one man may chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

“ These things I, the poor monk, moved by the cries of the poor, have chosen to write to your highness, knowing that you will more readily listen to a humble petitioner, than to an enemy in arms:—not that I think you stronger than your enemy, but that I know God the omnipotent to be stronger than both, and he resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Noble

Sir, if it were possible, I would visit you in person on this business ; but as this cannot be, I have selected some of my brethren to act in my stead, by whose entreaties added to mine, I hope it may be possible to obtain a renewal of concord, or if not, to dispose you to a truce until by our aid a firm peace may be made. Otherwise, if you will neither receive the amends offered, nor attend to our request when God, through us, thus warns you of the things that pertain to your well-being, — let HIM see and judge. We know well, — what indeed we justly fear, — that such forces cannot meet without a most serious slaughter on both sides.”

. Nothing could present a finer spectacle than the servants of the God of peace thus interposing themselves amid the fierce passions of semi-barbarians in order to prevent the miseries of war ; and it was this which, even to conscientious men, sanctified the usurpations of the church, and made them regard with pleasure the power which they *could* thus wield, as the vicegerents of God upon earth. Alas ! the bad means in time poisoned the good end, and the servants who sought to promote the cause of their Master by cunning and fraud, brought at last the very

cause itself into disrepute. The weapons which carried so keen an edge when used as we have just seen, were blunted when brought to bear on the rough business of every day life. Almost the same words *mutatis mutandis*, are used in an epistle from the Cistercian monks and their Abbot, to Louis VI. (le Gros) King of France, when he seized on some revenues belonging to the bishop of Paris, but, as appears from the correspondence, with little effect. The following letters to Pope Honorius II., explaining the business, will give a notion of the mode of proceeding on these affairs.

The Abbots Hugo of Pontigny, and Bernard of Clairvaux, address to the Sovereign Pontiff all that the speech of sinners may be allowed to say.

“The miserable lamentation of the bishops, nay of the whole church, we, its sons, if worthy of the name, cannot conceal from your holiness. What we have seen we tell. A great necessity called us from our cloister into public; and what we have thus become acquainted with, we now relate. Melancholy things were they that we saw: for the honour of the church under Honorius has suffered no little damage. The

humility of the king, or rather the firmness of the bishops, had already bent the stiff-neck of his wrath, when lo! the authority of the supreme Pontiff intervening,* the firmness was overthrown, alas! and the pride revived. We know that it was by false pretences (which is clearly to be seen from your epistle) that you were induced to order the suspension of so just an interdict," &c.

* * This letter was followed by another written in the name of the archbishop of Chartres, which I give entire.

"The repetition of this most sad history and its causes would be superfluous; for I doubt not that the heart of your Fraternity has been moved by the letter of the pious bishop of Paris. Nor was my testimony wanting to my brother and co-bishop; for I thought it good briefly to intimate what I saw and heard. Having received the modest complaint of the before-mentioned prelate, and with that of our venerable metropolitan, that also of the bishop of the whole dio-

* Namely, by a reversal of the interdict pronounced by the bishops.

cese of Sens, I called together certain other religious persons, and went to the king, humbly, as became us, to represent to him the great injury he had done : requesting him to restore to the bishop what had been taken from him : for he had in no respect deserved such treatment,—but we did not prevail. Hearing however that we were about to betake ourselves to the arms of the church in its defence, he was alarmed, and promised to restore all. But your letters arriving at this same time, in which letters you commanded that the realm should be released from the interdict, he was strengthened in evil and would not perform what he had promised ; but on the appointed day on which he again had promised to perform his engagements, when we presented ourselves before him, we sought peace, but it did not come ; we asked for our property, and behold disturbance. The consequence of your letters, finally, is that what he has wrongfully taken he yet more wrongfully holds ; and continues to plunder farther, because he is sure of retaining what he takes. For what we consider the just interdict of the bishop being removed by your act, what we had prepared, and hoped would bring us peace, is suspended by fear of you ; and thus we are become in the

mean time the laughing-stock of our neighbours ; for how long?—Let your holiness's compassion see to it.”

* * The cause of the king's anger against the bishop is not apparent in these letters ; but a subsequent one from the same Hugo and Bernard to Pope Honorius, on the subject of a like quarrel with the archbishop of Sens, throws some light on the transaction, and gives reason to suppose that the king had been provoked by the high pretensions of the bishops ; and that the liberty which the ecclesiastical body sought, consisted in an entire independence, and emancipation from the civil power. The same struggle was going on in England between Henry and Becket. On this occasion it appears from a letter to the pope, from the bishop of Paris himself, that the dean and archdeacons sided with the king. The following is an extract from the letter of Hugo and Bernard.

...“We who are on the spot, know that king Lewis (le Gros) persecutes not so much the bishops themselves, as their religious zeal, their attention to piety, their religious habit even. . . . Hence the innocence of the bishop of Paris has been loaded with contumely and

injuries. . . . and now it is attempted to break down the courage of the lord of Sens, so that the metropolitan being overcome, he may have no difficulty in oppressing the suffragans. Finally, who can doubt that he is opposing himself not to the bishop alone, but to religion itself, which he is certainly known to have called the destruction of his kingdom, and the enemy of his crown. This new Herod did not indeed entertain any suspicion of Christ whilst he was yet in the cradle, but envies and hates him now that he sees him exalted in the church. We believe that he has no other quarrel with the archbishop (of Sens) than this,—that he wishes to extinguish the religious spirit in him as in the rest.”

* * * The object of the letter is to induce the Pope (Honorius II.) to bring the whole affair into his own court, and decide it there : and the bishop of Paris, in his letter, pledges himself that if he (Honorius) will be firm, he will stand by him at whatever peril to himself and his friends :—no unmeaning speech on his part, for about four years before he had seen Thomas, a canon of St. Victor, slain under his very eyes, and as was supposed, not altogether without the connivance of the king : and the same was suspected with

regard to the murder of Hugh, bishop elect of Orleans, who fell under the hands of assassins, as he was returning from the king's court, about the same time. The murder of Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 1170, is but another instance of the barbarous violence of the times, which could find no better remedy against the unwarrantable encroachments of the ecclesiastical body, than the hand of the assassin. Both, according to modern views, were equally wrong: both, judged by their peers at that time, would have been held justified: the noble in maintaining the honour of his sovereign and the law of the land: the ecclesiastic in claiming supremacy for the spiritual power of Christ, of whom he held himself to be the minister. The evil lay not with the men who were unshrinkingly doing what their honour or their conscience dictated, but it lay in a complete and general ignorance of the first principles of civil and ecclesiastical polity: an ignorance not yet wholly removed; and which occasionally causes strange legislation, even in times which boast of being enlightened.

There is one feature of the age we are passing under review which cannot be dwelt on without disgust, and which seems an almost ne-

cessary concomitant of monastic institutions, which by withdrawing the persons thus vowed to heaven from all active employment and mental culture, and magnifying the possible evils of a free intercourse between the sexes, made that forbidden intercourse a subject of constant thought, as well as of the most degrading precautions—I mean the low tone of moral feeling. Even married life was held to be impure; and no one was thought perfect till he had forsaken the wife whom he had vowed before God to cherish, and the children who were dependant on him for protection; and the like with regard to the other sex. The consequence of this was a license of conduct and thought which make the lighter writings of the time hardly fit for perusal.

The apprehensions as to the conduct of the nuns which are betrayed in Abelard's regulations for the convent of the Paraclete, are absolutely insulting: while the business imposed upon them in order to prevent the evils of idleness, makes us wonder why they might not as well have been honest countrywomen, washing and mending, tending their dairy, and feeding their ducks and geese in freedom, as vowed nuns, dedicated to heaven. The following are extracts from the regulations above alluded to.

“Care shall be taken that the monks shall be far removed from any familiar intercourse with the nuns, nor shall be allowed to come farther than the vestibule, neither shall the abbot, or any head of a monastery be allowed to speak, even on subjects of discipline, with any but the lady superior; neither shall he be allowed to speak frequently even with her; and never, but in the presence of two or three sisters. And as the visits must be rare, so should the interview be short.” He provides that the convent of nuns should be near one of friars, for whom they are to do all menial offices, to wash, make, and mend their clothes; bake and cook food, attend to the dairy, and feed the poultry. In return for these good offices, one monk is to be selected to fetch from the city whatever is needed for the convent: he is to bring his *emplettes* to the deaconess, to whom he is “to deliver them in public, and is never to speak to her but in the presence of approved persons; they, (namely, deaconess and monk) are not to approach each other, or speak long together, and the monk is to be sworn before he enters upon the office to administer his charge faithfully, *et earum corpora a carnali contagio sollicitè observavit*—with much more of this kind. If any one be

ill, and supposed dying, extreme unction is to be administered by two senior monks, and a deacon, the nuns assisting; the wall however being between them;* and the infirmary is to be so built that the monks may have access for this purpose, neither seeing nor being seen by any one. Finally, once in the week, on the Sabbath day before dinner, they are allowed the luxury of cleanliness—in the *washing of their feet and hands*. He forbids wine excepting in sickness, and complains that the friars, to whom it is allowed, drink to intoxication. He forbids

* These extraordinary precautions are not laid aside, even yet, in convents of nuns. A physician in a town in Italy, who once attended a friend of the author, was also physician to a convent; and the account he gave of the preparations for his reception when called upon to attend a patient, was amusing. A bell was rung when he made his appearance at the gates, to warn all the nuns to retire to their cells: and the portress was charged to invest him with a sort of pinafore reaching to his heels, from behind which his hand was to be extended to feel the pulse of his patient. When asked the purpose of this extraordinary vestment, he laughed loudly, and said, "Oh to prevent them from seeing my legs—those poor things are shut up there, with nothing to do, till they fall in love with the first thing they see; with their confessor, if they can find nothing better." The coarse comments made by this man on the system,—he was an Italian,—need not be added here; they are obvious enough.

strictly what, he says, is done in almost all monasteries;—namely, the wiping hands and knives on bread, in order to save the washing of cloths : which bread was afterwards distributed to the poor, as a part of the charitable dole.

The following letter of St. Bernard to a nun of St. Mary of Troyes who wished to retire into a hermitage is curious, as showing how little of truly christian motives entered into the minds of these professors of ascetic religion : for the reputation of sanctity, and the fame to be thereby acquired, is alone put forward as the reward of a godly life.

“ It is told me,” says he, “ that you wish to leave your convent in order to lead a severer life elsewhere : and that not choosing to acquiesce in the dissuasions and even prohibition of your spiritual mother and sisters, you had agreed to refer the matter to me, saying that what I approved you should believe to be right. You ought to have taken the opinion of some more learned person on this point ; but since it is your choice to consult me, I will not conceal what I think best. I will not venture to form a hasty judgment on this your desire, which according to what I have heard, and what occurs to me after reiterated consideration, may be dictated

by zeal for God's service, so that your intention may be excusable: but how, according to your degree of knowledge, such a wish can be put in practice, I cannot at all see. What? you will say—is it not knowledge to have forsaken opulence, and the society of the city, and rich viands, and worldly delights? and will not my chastity be safer in the desert, where, conversing only with a few, perhaps, or one, I shall have none to please but such as I have myself approved?—By no means;—to whomsoever it pleases to act unadvisedly, the desert has abundance, and the forest has shade, and solitude has also silence. It is ill for him whom no one sees, and no one criticises. Where reprehension is not feared the tempter comes securely, and iniquity is perpetrated more boldly. In the convent, if you choose to do what is right no one hinders you; but if you should wish to do evil it is prevented; for it is soon discovered by many, it is blamed, and consequently amended; as, on the other hand, when they see you doing well, all admire, venerate, and imitate. You see therefore, daughter, that your merits will gain far greater fame, and your faults a quicker correction in the convent where there are persons present who can admire your good example or take offence at what you do amiss.

“ Finally, in order that you may find no excuse for your error from the distinction made in the gospel between the wise and foolish virgins, —you must be one or the other—if indeed you be a virgin—If of the last, the congregation is needful to you :—if of the first, you are needful to the congregation. For if you be wise and approved, certainly the religious life which has now been renewed with the approbation of all in your monastery, will, as we fear, be greatly impaired and defamed in consequence of your secession : for it will be said that so excellent a person would not have forsaken a good order for nothing :—but if you be known for one of the foolish, and secede, we shall say that it is because the good cannot tolerate the evil, that you retire to some place where you may live with what license you please. For before the reform of the order, it is said, that you thought nothing of all this ; but now that religion is on the increase, you have suddenly become more holy than your fellows, and have been seized with a sudden admiration of the eremitical life. I know, daughter, I know, and I wish that you knew as well as I do, the virus of the serpent, the wiles of the deceiver, the cunning of the tempter. In the forest dwells the wolf, and if you, a single sheep, penetrate

into its recesses, you assuredly wish to be his prey. Hear me, daughter, hear faithful counsel. Whether you are a sinner, or whether a saint, do not separate yourself from the flock, lest when the spoiler comes there should be no one to deliver. Are you a saint?—study that by your example your companions may acquire sanctity. Are you a sinner?—do not add sin to sin, but stay where you are, and repent, lest seceding to your own risk, as has been shown already, you should leave a scandal on the sisters, and provoke the comments of many slanderous tongues on yourself.”

• • It is evident here that the supposed sanctity of conventual life had degenerated into a system of miserable espionage; where higher motives than regard for the opinion of their own little world, seldom entered the mind, and where an ill-natured watching for the faults of others took the place of the noble benevolence and self-sacrifice which raises the soul to its highest dignity, and forms the true image of the Deity within. It is grievous to see maceration of the body substituted for elevation of soul: and to find men, who, with a better aim, might have civilized and christianized their age, wasting

their energies and their lives in endeavouring to destroy all those gentle charities of life by which man is raised above the brute, and which are so wrought into his nature by the hand of his Creator, that in destroying them we destroy the finest part of the fabric, and leave a ruin where we found the plan of a structure that might have been "fitly framed together," according to the design of the Great Architect, for his own glory and the benefit of mankind. The chronicles of these times, generally written by monks, are full of histories of temptations to which holy men were subjected by the power of the devil; which in fact were nothing more than the half-delirious, or idle fancies of an imagination which had no legitimate employment left for it:—temptations which would never have been experienced by persons sufficiently engaged in business or study to give the brain due exercise, and the body sufficient movement as well as nourishment, to preserve health, and secure sound sleep. Had St. Anthony, whose varied temptations have afforded painters so amusing an occupation, been a conscientious farmer, he would have been far more useful in the world, and would have undergone none of these strange conflicts;—impossible as real transactions, but quite real as

regards the liveness of the impression on a disordered brain.

The following letter from St. Bernard to a young lad who had embraced a monastic life, but who had been withdrawn from it by an aged uncle who wished for the solace of his young nephew's company and attentions, shows how far the spirit of the gospel and that of the monastery were at variance. The young man was anxious to minister to the increasing infirmities of an aged, and as it appears, an affectionate relative: what could grace a youth more than such a desire? what could be more in accordance with the spirit of the gospel? The old man uses no means but affectionate entreaties:—he had already brought him up;—he would make him his heir—What could be a lovelier picture of a life such as Christ himself led, whose last care was for the comfort of his mother's declining years?—yet this is denounced by the sainted Bernard as a wilful rushing into endless perdition. This system could only finish in a wide spread immorality, such as history tells us did prevail: for if heaven was thought to be reached only through the cloister, and all who administered the affairs of the world were hastening to everlasting torments, what mattered it to them whether they

added a few more sins to the burthen? the doom could not be worse: this world was all they had, and they might well join in the cry of the sensualist, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die—" *i. e.* let us drown the anticipations of the future in licentious pleasures, and not think of death till it comes.

Friar Bernard the sinner, to Fulco the ingenuous youth, showing him how he may rejoice in his youth, and not be sad in his old age.

"I shall not wonder if you are surprised that I, a rustic, and a monk, should write to you, when there appears no good reason for it: but if you reflect on what is written—'I am a debtor both to the wise and the unwise'—and 'Charity seeketh not her own,' you will perhaps understand that what she dictates cannot be impertinent. For charity compels me to blame you because it grieves for you, though you do not grieve for yourself; which pities you, though you are not miserable, and grieves the more because you do not lament over what is truly a subject of grief;—and do not feel miserable, though really most pitiable. . . . Charity would have you feel grief that you may put away the

subject of it: would have you know your misery that you may cease to suffer it. . . . She it is who is the mother of men and angels, who keeps all things in peace, both in heaven and earth. She it is, my dear Fulco, who makes the brethren with whom you once partook of her sweet food, dwell together in unity. This venerable mother complains that she is set at nought by you, and expostulates with you on the injury you have done her. . . . In what, you will say, have I injured her? wherein have I shown her contempt? . . . In this, without doubt, that you have weaned yourself too soon from the milk of the maternal bosom wherewith you ought to have been nourished. . . . O insensate boy!—boy more in mind than in age, who fascinated you thus, and tempted you to leave the right path?—My uncle, you will say. So Adam of yore listened to his wife, and the wife excused herself in that she had listened to the serpent: yet both received the sentence due to their sin. I will not allow you to accuse the dean your uncle;—I will not allow him for an excuse, for you yourself are inexcusable. His sin cannot acquit you. For what did he do? Did he carry you off?—Did he use force?—No, he entreated instead of binding you; he

allured you by kindnesses, instead of using boldly violence. Who compelled you to listen to his entreaties,—to his flatteries? The sheep flies trembling when it sees the wolf;—the dove when she sees the hawk . . . and will you when you see the thief, consent? for what other than a thief can seek to steal the precious pearl of Christ, namely, your soul?

“I would conceal his fault if I could, lest I should only gain hatred instead of good fruit from speaking the truth: but I cannot. He who does not restrain his hand from evil when he is able, although he should not absolutely effect his will, is guilty of the wish. He certainly strove to extinguish in me the heavenward ardour of my noviciate, but he did not succeed. Another of his nephews, your cousin Guirrico, he resisted as long as he could, but to what purpose? He rather forwarded the design which he opposed. The determination of the youth forced the old uncle to desist from his persecution; and the nephew came off victorious, the more gloriously so from the strength of the temptation. But alas! how is it that he who could not vanquish him, has vanquished you? or how is it that he who has vanquished you was defeated by him?—Is it not because

he was the more courageous of the two?
But what shall I say of the wickedness of the uncle, who withdraws his nephews from the service of Christ, and drags them with him to hell? Is it thus that we are wont to render service to our friends? Those whom Christ calls to remain with him to all eternity, the uncle recalls to remain with him in eternal fire. I wonder that Christ has not been wrath with him, and said, 'How often would I have gathered thy nephews as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! behold thy house is left unto thee desolate!' Christ says, 'Suffer little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'—the uncle says, 'Suffer my nephews to burn with me.'—Christ says, 'They are mine, and ought to serve me.' 'But,' says the uncle, 'they ought to perish with me.'—Christ says, 'They are mine; I redeemed them'—the uncle says—'But I brought them up.'— 'But,' says Christ, 'you brought them up with my bread, not your own; I, on the contrary, redeemed them with my own blood, not yours.'— Thus the carnal uncle contends against the spiritual father for his nephews; and whilst he wishes to load them with temporal good, deprives them of their heavenly inheritance.

For Christ holds it no robbery to collect around him those whom he made and redeemed by his blood, and to whom he had already said, Him who cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

“ He had gladly opened the door to Fulco when he knocked, and had opened his arms to receive him. What more?—It was needful to put off the old man, and put on the new; and what he had before been only in name, he was to practise canonically in life and manners. The fame of this spreads: and the news being spread abroad, the uncle hears of it. What now does the carnal man, when he loses the comfort of having with him the flesh which he had nourished, and which he loved only as flesh? To others it was the savour of life unto life, but not so to him. Why?—because the carnal man does not perceive the things which are in the Spirit of God; for they appear foolishness to him. If he had had the spirit of Christ, he would not have lamented for the flesh, so much as he would have rejoiced for the Spirit: but because he considered the things of the earth, and not those which are above, he revolved the matter sadly in his mind somewhat in the following manner. ‘What do I hear? woe is me! How bright a hope is blasted! But why?

ought any thing to be valid that is done without my advice and permission? What law, what right, what justice, what reason is there in this, that I should receive no comfort or benefit from one whom I have brought up from his birth? My head is grown grey, and alas! the rest of my life will be full of sadness because the support of my age has forsaken me. Alas! if my soul be this night required of me, whose will those things be which I have prepared? My full storehouses, my fruitful sheep,—my fat oxen, of which I have such abundance;—whose will they be? Farms, meadows, house, vessels of silver and gold—for whom have they been collected? I possessed myself of richer and more productive offices in my church, and all other honours, although I could not unite them in myself, I enjoyed in imagination through Fulco. What shall I do then? Shall I lose all this on account of one? for whatever I have without him I hold to be lost. I will therefore retain all this, and recall him if possible. But how? for it is done, and has been spoken of. What is done cannot be undone, and what has been spoken of can no longer be hidden. Fulco is now a regular canon;—if he returns to the world he will be marked with infamy, but it is

better even to hear this of him than to live without him. . . .

“ Acquiescing therefore in this counsel of the flesh, and forgetting reason and law, he rises up like a lion raging for his prey; or a lioness deprived of her young . . . and with no reverence for sacred things, intrudes into the habitation of the saints, in which Christ had concealed his young pupil from the strife of men; in order shortly to enable him to mix in the company of angels. He requires that his nephew shall be given up to him, he complains that he has been unjustly forsaken, even while Christ is claiming his own rights, and saying—‘What art thou doing, miserable man? why art thou so furious?—why dost thou persecute me? Is it not enough for thee that thou hast taken thy own soul away from me, and, by means of thy example, those of many more: but must thou also sacrilegiously steal this too out of my hands? Dost thou not fear the future judgment; or dost thou condemn my terrors? To whom is this insult offered? Against whom dost thou war? Madman! return to a better mind, remember thy end, and sin no more. . . . And thou, youth,’ he says, ‘if thou consentest shalt die the death . . . thy uncle, who has already lost his own soul,

now seeks to lose thine ; the words of his mouth are fraud and iniquity. . . . Take care, my son, that thou dost not consent to the will of the flesh, for my sword shall consume all flesh : spurn at flatteries ;—contemn promises ;—he offers much, but I offer more. Forsake then the earthly for the heavenly ; the temporal for the eternal. . . . At least it is thy duty to perform the vow which thy lips pronounced : for it is just to call upon him to execute his promise who made it under no compulsion. . . . To thy uncle he says, ‘ Do not bring back a regular monk to the world, for if thou dost thou seducest him into apostacy :—and thou that art already vowed, follow not the secular man ; because if thou dost thou persecutest me, whom of thy own free will thou thus injurest. . . . Thou, if thou seducest the soul which I died for, constitutest thyself the enemy of my cross ; for he who doth not gather with me scattereth.—Thou if thou consentest, art dissentient from me, for he who is not with me is against me : how much more then is he my enemy who deserts, after having been with me ? . . . Both of you must come before my judgment seat, both suffer my sentence ; the one for his own broken vow, the other as his tempter ; and if the first dies in his sin, his

blood will be required at the hands of the other.—

“ These, and other like words, O Christ, thou hast invisibly, but terribly pronounced :—with these sacred admonitions thou hast knocked at the hearts of both. Having heard these things, who would not fear, and fearing, repent ? Unhappy old man ! cruel uncle !—He is already decrepit and almost dying, but he seeks before he dies to destroy the soul of his nephew, whom he takes from Christ in order to have an heir to his sins. But to him who is wicked in himself what can be good ? He had rather have an heir to his estates, than an intercessor for his iniquities.

“ But what have I to do with our deans and masters, who have merited the first place in our churches. They hold the keys of knowledge, and possess the first seats in the congregation. It is for them to take care how they judge hypocrites, call back fugitives, and when they have called them back, if such be their pleasure, let them go again,—collect the dispersed, and disperse those already united :—what is all that to me ? I will acknowledge, my dear Fulco, that I have in this gone somewhat beyond my own small sphere, while endeavouring to palliate

your fault. I will therefore omit all further mention of these, lest they should be justly indignant, not so much at the reprehension, as at the person who ventures to write it, and should think less of correcting their own fault, than of blaming my presumption. . . .

“ ‘But why,’ you will say, ‘do you reprehend me alone, when you have cause to blame others yet more?’ To which I reply;—on account of the peculiar enormity of your sin. For though others live dissolutely, though they are irregular and disorderly in their whole conduct, yet they have never professed to observe any rule or discipline: they are sinners, but not mean shufflers:—but you, although you may live humbly and well;—though you may be chaste, sober, and altogether religious in your life; yet will this shuffling off of your vow stain the whole, and make it far less acceptable to God. . . . This I tell you plainly, because with your lukewarmness you will please God less than if you were such as they (the before-mentioned libertines) are; wholly cold and insensible. For God waits patiently for this coldness to change into heat, but sees with indignation that you have sunk from heat to lukewarmness. . . .

“ Alas ! how is it that you are so soon tired of Christ, of whom it is written, ‘ Milk and honey are under his tongue.’ I am astonished that you should grow sick of this sweet food, if indeed you ever did taste how sweet the Lord is. But assuredly you never have tasted, and do not know the sweet flavour of Christ ; and thus, being inexperienced, you do not long for him : for if you have tasted, and it was not sweet, then certainly you have no palate. . . . In your uncle’s house you cannot be intoxicated with the richness of the house of God. ‘ Why,’ you will say. Because it is a house full of luxuries. As fire and water cannot exist together, so spiritual and carnal enjoyment cannot be found in the same place . . . where there is a curious diversity of viands, where rich furniture delights the eye by its various colour, as much as the varied dishes do the palate, the mind remains fasting from its celestial food. ‘ Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth,’ but, with declining years, temporal joys also fail, and finally you sink into eternal misery. . . . It is with such that you now consort, whose wicked conversation corrupts the good manners of youth.

“ But why do you not go out from among

them? What have you to do in the city when you have already chosen the cloister? What have you to do with the world which you have already contemned? . . . If you seek to unite the two, I reply briefly—‘Remember son, thou in thy life receivedst thy good’—‘*receivedst*,’ he says, not *stolest*, lest you should vainly flatter yourself that when you are content with your own you do not steal. But what are these things that are your own? The benefices of the church? Right: when you rise to vigils, go to mass, and say the hours as well by night as by day, you do well. Doing this for the church you do not receive your maintenance gratis. He who serves the altar well may live by the altar:—but the altar is not to furnish luxury;—the altar is not to minister to pride: to give the means of buying golden bridles and embroidered saddles, and silver stirrups, and furs round your neck and hands, varied with purple ornaments. Whatever you retain beyond the necessary food, and the simplest dress, is not yours: it is rapine, it is sacrilege. . . .

“What are you about in the city, effeminate soldier? your comrades whom you have so cowardly deserted, fight and conquer; they knock and enter: they seize upon heaven and

reign : and you, seated upon your ambling steed, dressed in purple and fine linen, traverse the squares, and saunter along the streets. These are the habits and the ornaments of peace, not the muniments of war. Are you not saying to yourself, 'Peace, when there is no peace?' Purple does not vanquish concupiscence, does not repel pride and avarice, and if there be any other fiery darts of the enemy it will not extinguish them, neither will it finally,—which indeed will have the most weight with you—either prevent fear, or defend you from death. Where are the arms of war? where is the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation,—the mail of patience?—Why do you fear? there are more with us than against us. Take your arms, resume your strength while yet the battle continues. You have the angels for spectators and protectors; the Lord himself is there as your helper and safeguard . . . and he whom Christ has known in the battle, he will recognise in heaven . . . I think I have now said enough to move the soul of an ingenuous and modest youth . . . and I confide in him so far that I trust soon to rejoice in him."

* * * It is needless to comment on this letter;

it speaks for itself; but perhaps the reader will find some satisfaction in knowing that the kindly feelings of human nature triumphed over monkish severity, and that Fulco remained with his uncle.

The picture of the age would hardly be complete without some instances of the superstition and credulity which had now taken the place of rational and pure religion. The following is extracted from one of the contemporary chroniclers.

“ In those days an epistle sent from Heaven, was suspended above the altar of St. Simon, in Golgotha, where Christ was crucified for the redemption of the world, which being seen there hanging on high, men prostrated themselves, and entreated God in his mercy to make known his will. On the third day, the Patriarch and Archbishop Zacharias arose from prayer, and placing the mitre on the hallowed altar, took the holy letter of God; which, when they had inspected they found to be thus superscribed. ‘ I am the Lord who commanded you to observe the holy Lord’s day, in which I rested from my works, in order that all mortals might rest to eternity: but you have not observed it, neither have you repented of your sins.’ As I said in my gospel, ‘ Heaven and earth shall pass

away, but my word shall not pass away.' I caused repentance and amendment of life to be preached to you, and you have not repented. I sent Pagans upon you, and strange nations which poured out your blood upon the earth, and yet you have not believed: And because you would not observe the Lord's day, I sent you famine for a short time; but I speedily received you again into favour; and then you did worse. I will therefore that no one shall do any work but those of charity, from the ninth hour of Saturday to the rising of the sun on Monday, and if any one has done work in that time, then he shall amend it by penance. And if you will not obey this my mandate, verily I say unto you, and swear to you by my seat and my throne, and the cherubim who guard my seat, that I will not send you any more written mandates, but I will open the heavens, and instead of natural showers, I will rain upon you stones, and wood, and hot water, in the night time, so that none may be able to avoid them, for I will destroy all wicked men. And I tell you that you shall die the death, on account of the Lord's day, and other festivals which you have not kept. I will send upon you beasts having the heads of lions, and the hair of women, and the tails of camels; and they shall

be so hungry that they shall devour your flesh, and you will desire to fly to the sepulchres of the dead, and hide yourselves from the fear of these beasts. And I will take the sun away from your eyes, and will send darkness upon you, that you may kill one another from not seeing what you are doing ; and I will turn my face away from you, and will show you no mercy. I will burn your bodies, and the hearts of those who do not keep the Lord's day. Hear my voice, lest ye perish from the earth, because of the holy day of the Lord. Depart from evil and repent ye of your sins ; which, if ye do not, ye shall perish like Sodom and Gomorrha. Now know ye, that ye are saved by the prayers of my most holy Mother, Mary, and of my holy Angels, which were abundantly offered for you every day. I gave you abundance of corn and wine, and yet ye have not obeyed me. For widows and orphans cry to you every day, and ye have no compassion on them. Pagans have compassion, but ye have none. I will dry up the fruitful trees for your sins ; the rivers and fountains shall be dry. I gave you a law on Mount Sinai, which ye have not kept. Afterwards I gave you a law by my own mouth, which ye have not observed. Depraved men !

ye have not kept holy the sacred day of my resurrection. Ye take away other men's goods, and feel no concern about it. Because of this I will send worse beasts among you, which shall devour the breasts of your women. I will curse those who deal unjustly with their brethren; I will curse those who oppress the poor and the orphans. For ye have forsaken me, and have followed the prince of this world. Hear my voice, and ye shall obtain mercy; but ye cease not from your evil deeds, nor from the works of the devil, since ye commit adulteries and perjuries, and therefore nations shall surround you, and as beasts shall they devour you.'

“ When the Patriarch and clergy of the whole holy land had diligently examined this letter, it was decreed by common consent that it should be transmitted to the Roman Pontiff, in order to have his judgment upon it; inasmuch as what he should decree would be satisfactory to the whole church. But when the lord Pope had notice of this letter, he immediately ordained preachers, who, going into all parts of the world, proclaimed every where the tenor of this epistle, the Lord himself co-operating and confirming their words by signs and wonders. Among these preachers was the Abbot of Flai, by name

Eustachius, a religious and erudite man, who was glorified by many miracles. When he had arrived at Wye, a village not far from Dover, he entered on his office of preacher; and when he had blessed a certain spring, the Lord, of his grace, infused into it such virtue, that merely from tasting it the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the dumb spoke, and the deaf regained their hearing: and generally whatever sick person drank of this fountain in faith, joyfully experienced a return of health. Then there came to him a woman tormented by a devil, and swelled as it were with a dropsy; and she prayed of him to heal her. To whom he answered:—‘Have good faith, daughter, and go to the spring at Wye, which the Lord has blessed: drink of it, and you will there recover your health.’ The woman went and drank according to the command of the man of God; whereupon she immediately vomited, and in the sight of all those who were there assembled, expecting their cure, threw up two large and very black toads, which to show that they were dæmons, were immediately transformed into two immensely large black dogs, and presently after assumed the asinine form. The woman was astonished, and ran furiously after them to catch

them. But the man who was deputed to guard the spring sprinkling some of the water between the woman and these monsters, they flew up into the air, where they vanished, leaving an ill smell behind them."*

* * Many more miracles of the same kind are reported with the same faith in their reality ; but it would be waste of time to translate them. Those who could believe *such* a letter as the above to be divine, were not likely to find any demand on their credulity too large, and the reader may well be spared the trouble of going through narratives generally puerile, and frequently disgusting ; for at that time the notions entertained of the temptations of evil spirits, which form the staple of monkish legends, were no less gross than the people who narrated them. The dæmons of that period were tangible, visible, and audible, and had none of the attributes with which a more refined age has invested the Evil One, and which, unthinkingly have been made almost to trench on those of the Deity. The tempter of the monks was a sensual, spiteful, and very silly being : easily over-reached, and obnoxious to pain : incapable

* Matt. Paris, Hist. Angl. A. D. 1200.

of discovering what was passing in the mind of man, and only acting, like other finite beings, in one place at a time, and upon previously received information. The tales told by the credulous writers of that age of the operations of these dæmons might afford a subject for mirth, but nothing more.

I here bring my selections to a close: the reader has before him the men of the twelfth century, telling their own tale; and many a grave lesson may be learned from it: for there must be deep causes in human nature which could work such a change in Christianity as a comparison between the treatises of Bernard and those of Clement of Alexandria will exhibit. In the hands of the learned and polished rhetorician, Christianity was a civilizing, holy, happy faith: all the precepts which he enforces on his converts teach a moderate and temperate use indeed, but still the use of the good things which God had given them; and he appeals to no less an authority on this point than the example of the Saviour himself. The monk, on the contrary, comes forward with his 'touch not, taste not, handle not,' and would make man believe that his life can never be acceptable to God till he has made it wholly unacceptable to himself.

This was *not* the doctrine of the Saviour; neither in precept, nor in practice, was it so: Clement of Alexandria lived near enough to the time to be able to refer to the remembrance,* still kept up, of his manners in society; and alludes also to precepts with regard to entertainments which we do not now find in the gospels, but which he says teach us that “he who drinks wine should do so with wise moderation.” But this severity towards the body *was* the doctrine of gross idolaters, witness the priests of Baal who cut themselves with knives to propitiate their deity, or, — to take a more familiar instance, — the devotees of Hindostan, whose sanctity is measured by the degree of suffering they have learned to bear. The causes which gave rise to idolatry were to be found in the ignorance of the mass of the people, which would not allow of spiritualizing the mind sufficiently to conceive a completely abstract idea: — the Deity must be made perceivable to the bodily senses or he was to them as nothing: and a tangible, visible, deity must have tangible and visible ser-

* In reproving the ill manners of his ruder converts in eating and drinking, he refers to the personal conduct of Christ in this respect; *ουχι αστειως; ουχι κοσμιως;* — *was it not polite, was it not elegant?* — Pæd. lib. ii. c. 2.

vices. Between man and man, how frequently do we find the things *done* for a friend referred to as the proof of affection, rather than that deep feeling of the heart so wrought into the very nature, that unkindness or wrong towards the friend is impossible : yet of the two, the last is far the nobler. Thus it is with regard to the service of the Deity : the idolater has already brought his god to a level with himself, by enduing him with human attributes. The divinity thus figured is partial : he loves one nation, one community better than another, and the same grossness of intellect which would seek to show affection to a friend, by ministering to his animal nature, and think that when that was done, all was done, will think that the outward observances which are to show all mankind how dearly we love the Deity, because for him we are willing to give up not only what the world most prizes, but even the very requirements of our nature—must be the most acceptable service to him. The fault lies not so much in the religion taught, as in the persons who are to receive it ; and the experience of these ages of superstition and gross immorality, — even when the world had nominally received a system which united the highest philosophy with the purest devotion ;

—ought to show us, that neither creeds nor catechisms, nor obedience to the dicta of the church, nor any of the other specifics for remedying the lack of vital Christianity in the world, will avail anything, while men's minds are uncultivated, and their intellects *hébétés* from a want of proper employment.

Let us then instead of sighing for "the good old times," from which we have here for a moment raised the veil and shown the ugly features which it conceals: seek to make *new times*; times wherein Christianity shall do all that it was intended to do for the world, but never has done as yet,—and the kingdoms of the earth shall become as the prophet has told us they will—"the kingdoms of God and of his Christ." For this we pray every time that we repeat the prayer which Christ himself taught us: let not this prayer be confined to a mere passive wish; but let us, with all the energies of our nature, advance the time as far^a as in us lies.

THE END.



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